THE CULT OF WEAPONS

THE ICONOGRAPHY OF ĀYUDHA PURUṢAS

V. R. MANI

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AGAM KALA PRAKASHAN
DELHI
1985

First published 1985
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State Museum Library
5945
Lucknow

Published by
Dr. Agam Prasad, M.A., Ph. D.,
Dip. in Museology for AGAM KALA PRAKASHAN
34, Central Market, Ashok Vihar, Delhi-110052.

Printed by Arun Typographer
at Raj Press, R-3, Inderpuri, New Delhi-110012.

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Preface

The recent years have witnessed a prolific output of literature on art, architecture and iconography but still the field remains inexhaustible meriting consideration from different angles and aspects. Unfortunately most of the competent archaeologists and art historians observe a strange abstinacy in writing leaving the field for pedestrian exercises even though a few publications of recent times limit the application of this observation to fewer titles now than before. The implied and immodest assumption that the present monograph embodies results of original research is to be tested by the exacting standards of the academic community. This monograph constitutes two chapters of a thesis entitled *Some Minor Deities in Indian Religion and Art* submitted to the University of Madras wayback in 1968 for the award of the M. Litt research degree and no effort was made to publish the same for various reasons. The other chapters of the thesis (relating to the cult of the Saptamatrkas) are being published separately in the form of another book. I am grateful to the Ministry of Education, Government of India which sanctioned a fellowship to me to work on the subject, to the late Professor T. V. Mahalingam, the then Head, Department of Ancient History and Archaeology, University of Madras, Madras, who guided me in this pursuit and to the authorities of the University of Madras for permitiing me to publish this. As the material of this monograph was written in 1967 it had to be revised at a few places to synthesize the results of researches done subsequently by me and other scholars. For illustrations my grateful acknowledgements are to the Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi, Institute de Indologie, Pondicherry, Archaeological Museum, Mathura, the Junagarh Museum, Junagarh, the State Museum, Lucknow, the Central Museum, Nagpur, the Archaeological Museum, Gwalior and the Government Museum, Madras. I am also thankful to Agam Kala Prakashan, New Delhi for publishing this monograph in a short time.

V. R. MANI

New Delhi.

1

ĀYUDHAS : MYTHOLOGY AND TRADITION

In the history of the evolution and development of various religious practices and cults in India the veneration and adoration of the multifarious weapons associated with deities is of considerable interest and significance because implicit in this worship is the belief that the divine element is manifest not only in the form of the god but also in objects and iconographic attributes connected with him. Apart from *Viṣṇu's Flaming Wheel : The Iconography of the Sudarśana Cakra* by W.E. Begley[1] and two articles, one each by C. Sivaramamurti[2] and R. C. Agrawala,[3] not much work has been done on the incidence of weapons of deities in Indian art, their personification and worship. W. E. Begley is essentially concerned with the Sudarśana Cakra of Viṣṇu while the other weapons of this god are many depending upon the particular iconographic form

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1. Published by New York University Press for the College Art Association of America, New York, 1973.
2. "The Weapons of Vishṇu", *Artibus Asiae*, 18, (1955), pp. 128-37.
3. "Cakra Puruṣa in Early Indian Art", *Bharatiya Vidya*, 24(1964), pp. 41-45.

in which he is depicted. These include *Dhanus*, *Kaumodaki*, *Gadā*, *Pāñcajanya*, *Śankha*, *Nandaki Asi* etc. Besides these there are weapons of Śaiva dieties like *Trisūla*, *Paraśu*, *Vajra*, *Śakti*, *Daṇḍa Khaḍga*, *Pāśa*, *Aṅkuśa*, *Dhvaja* etc. which are described in the Śilpa texts as befitting personification.

The incipient beginnings of the practice of personifying objects can be traced back to the days of the *Ṛg Veda*. But the personification and worship of weapons assume a recognizably definite shape only in later periods. The *Mahābhārata* stipulates that swords must be worshipped[4] and the *Rāmāyaṇa* speaks of personified weapons.[5] All the weapons are worthy of worship but according to the *Vāmanapurāṇa* the Sudarśana is superior to the others.[6] The mythological origin of the more important *āyudhas* is alluded to in the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* : the Sudarśana of Viṣṇu, Trisūla of Śiva, Vajra of Kārttikeya and other weapons were made from the sun by Viśvakarma,[7] though as pointed out by W.E. Begley,[8] according to certain other *Purāṇas* it was Śiva who created the Sudarśana. Begley also quotes the translation of a passage from the

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4. *Mahābhārata*, 12. 160. 85.
5. *Rāmāyaṇa*, 3. 46. 16.
6. *Vāmanapurāṇa*, 12. 14.
7. H.H. Wilson, *The Vishnu Purāṇā* (translation), 3rd Edition, p. 215.
8. W. E. Begley, *Vishnu's Flaming Wheel : The Iconography of the Sudarśana Cakra*, p. 20.

Padmapurāṇa to relate how Śiva created Sudarśana from the flames emitted by Brahma and other gods.[9] A similar account is narrated by T.A. Gopinatha Rao thus : "On one occasion Viṣṇu found himself unable to conquer certain *asuras* and prayed to Śiva for the grant of the *Cakra* which was in Śiva's possession. To his prayer he added a *pūja* in which he employed a thousand flowers daily. One day he sat for *pūja* with the required number of flowers but at the end he missed one flower, which to test the strength of his devotion Śiva had secreted; Viṣṇu at once plucked one of his eyes which are always compared to lotuses (*kamala-locana*)—and threw the same in offering on Śiva. Śiva became so pleased with the devotion of Viṣṇu that he presented him with the *Chakra* which was originally in his possession."[10] According to another account given in the *Mahābhārata* the *Cakra* was presented to Kṛṣṇa by Agni.[11]

It is significant to note that the weapon *Cakra* which is one of the two major weapons of Viṣṇu is referred to in the *Ṛgveda* as the weapons of Indra with which he destroyed Vṛtra and other demons.[12]

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[9] *Ibid.*

[10] T. A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. 2, pp. 209-10.

[11] P. C. Roy's translation of the *Mahābhārata*, *Ādhiparvan*, CLXXV, p. 625.

[12] O. H. de A. Wijesekera, "Discoid weapons in Ancient India, A Study of Vedic *Cakra*, *Pavi* and *Kṣurapavi*", *Adyar Library Bulletin*, 25, pp. 250-61.

In a few contexts in the *Ṛgveda* Vajra, the chief weapon of Indra figures as a synonym for Cakra. As pointed out by Begley, Sāyana, the medieval commentator on the *Ṛgveda* explains the meaning of Cakra as Vajra in the shape of Cakra.[13] That some sort of a synonym prevailed between Vajra and Cakra may be guessed from two different references in the *Bhagavat Gīta*. In the Vibhūti Yoga of the *Bhagavat Gīta*[14] Kṛṣṇa says *Devānām asmi Vāsavaḥ* which means 'I am Vāsavaḥ (Indra) among the *devas*'; it is therefore quite natural that he appropriates to himself Vajra the weapon of Indra and says elsewhere that '*āyudhānām aham vajram*' i.e. 'of weapons I am Vajra'.[15] When Kṛṣṇa revealed his *Visvarūpa* form to Arjuna the latter refers to his manifold arms (*anekabāhu*) in verse 16 and many arms (*bahu bāhu*) in verse 23, both in chapter 11 of the *Bhagavat Gīta*. The numerous weapons of Kṛṣṇa were uplifted at the time of his *Visvarūpa* form (*aneka udyata āyudham*).[16] But while describing the *Visvarūpa* form Arjuna refers to Gadā and Cakra only.[17]

The story of the appearance of Sudarśana before Bali whom Viṣṇu as Vāmana quelled in the Vāmana incarnation is described in the *Vāmanapurāṇa*.[18] On seeing the Sudarśana with thousand-spokes Bali bowed reverentially and recited a hymn thus : "I bow down to the thousand-rayed,thousand-coloured, thousand-spoked, extremely pure, destroyer of the race of the demons, the discus of Hari. I bow down to the discuss of Hari, in the nave of which is Brahman, in the month of which is Sankara, the trident-holder, and at the root of spokes the major mountains. In the spokes of which are present the gods including Indra, the Sun and Fire. In its motion exist wind, water, fire, earth, sky. At the ends of the spokes are present the clouds, lightening stars, planets; and in its border allude the Bālakhilya and other (Vedic) sages. I bow down with devotion to the great weapon of Vāsudeva. The sins that are born of my body, speech and mind, O radiant Sudarśana discuss, consume them and rid me of sins born of the family and sins that relate to my father and mother. Destroy them without delay. I bow to you, O weapon of Viṣṇu. May my mental agony be destroyed and may my ailments perish. O discus, may my calamities disappear by recitation of your name".[19] The Sudarśana responded to this prayer, came out of the *pātāla* where it had entered earlier and divested the demons of their energy. Elsewhere in the same *Purāṇa* we are told that in spokes of the Sudarśana "reside gods, months, signs of the Zodiac and the six seasons for the protection of the

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[13] W. E. Begby, *op. cit*., p. 9.
[14] *Bhagavat Gīta*, Chapter 10, *v*. 22.
[15] *Ibid.*
[16] *Ibid.*, Chapter 11, *v*. 10.
[17] *Ibid.*, Chapter 11, *v*. 17.
[18] *Vāmanapurāṇā*, 67. 6-19.

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[19] *The Vāmanapurāṇa.* English translation by A. S. Gupta, pp. 527-28.

(wise)."[20] The earliest evidence of a tantric cult of the Sudarśana is found in the *Garuḍapurāṇa*[21] because at one context it is said in this *Purāṇa* that "involving...the diety of gentle form, adorned with a crown and holding conch-shell discus, club and lotus, in the mystic diagram he (the devotee) should worship him."[22] Perhaps the most elaborate description and invocation of the Sudarśana isto found in the *Soḍasayudhastotram* of Vedānta Desika, a Vaiṣṇava saint of the 13th and 14th centuries, wherein the description of the weapon is similar to the one given in the *Ahirbudhnya-Samhita* (37. 13-15).[23] More on Vedānta Desika's contribution to the worship of the Sudarśana and the metaphysical meaning of the *Cakra* are said in the discussion on the cult of Cakrattāḻvar on pages 17-22 below.

Some works in Sanskrit ascribable to the early centuries of the Christian era make references to contemporary conceptions of anthropomorphic *āyudhas*. Bhāsa, for instance, describes in the *Bālacarita*[24] the appearance of such personified weapons of Viṣṇu as Sudarśana Cakra, Sārṅga Dhanus, Kaumodaki Gadā, Pāñcajanya Śankha and

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[20] *Ibid.*, p. 459.

[21] W. E. Begley, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

[22] Dutt, *Garuḍapurāṇam*, p. 81; quoted in W. E. Begley, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

[23] W. E. Begley, *op. cit.*, p. 30-31 and *fn.* 160.

[24] *Bālacarita*, Ts. Woolner and Sarup, i, pp. 12-13; *v.* 28 *ll.* 1-3.

Nandaki Asi along with Garuḍa and their declaration that they would descend on earth as cowherds to enjoy the exploits of Kṛṣṇa. In the *Dūtāvākya* he refers to the appearance of these weapons at the time of the binding of Vāsudeva by Duryodhana.[25] Kālidāsa in the *Raghuvamśa* also refers to the dwarfish variety of Cakrapuruṣa.[26]

In the early Tamil Śangam classics assignable to the early centuries of the Christian era also *śankha* and *cakra* are the weapons commonly mentioned in association with Viṣṇu. The *cakra* is known in Tamil as *nēmi* or *tigiri* and hence the god is referred to as Nēmiyāṉ and Tigiriyāṉ.[27] In the *Maṇimēkhalai*, *Paripāḍal* and *Mullaippāṭṭu* also there are references to *cakra* with shining rays and golden lustre in the right hand and *śankha* in the left hand.[28] The *Śilappadikāram* also mentions both the weapons.[29] In the *Nāṉmaṇikkaḍigai* there is a description of the shining rays of *cakra* with those of the sun. Such descriptions are found in the *Kuraḷ*[30] and the *Nālaḍiyār*[31] also. In a verse in the *Paripāḍal*[32] we find the mention of three more weapons, viz. *gadā*, *khaḍga* and *sāranga*. As pointed out by R. Champakalakshmi this verse also mentions certain other weapons like *Valampuri* (*sankha*), *nēmi* (*Cakra*), *śilai-ambu* (bow and arrow-*sāranga*), *pārāvalai*, *vāḷ* (sword-*khaḍga*), *taṇḍu* (*gadā*) and *nāñjil* (plough share-*hala*).[33] Of these *nāñjil* and *taṇḍu* are said to be the attributes sacred to Balarāma and the rest are those of Viṣṇu. It is interesting to note from some early Tamil works that the five weapons of Viṣṇu constituted the motifs used in the ornament called *aimpadaittāli* worn by children in Tamil Nadu in early times.[34]

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[25] *Dūtavākya*. Act I, pp, 12-15.

[26] *Raghuvamśa*, X. 12, 60.

[27] *Kalittogai*, V, 104, 19, 9, 78; *Aham*, V, 178, 11, 14-15; *Padiṟṟuppattu*, V, 31. 1, 9; *Naṟṟiṇai*, invocation.

[28] *Maṇimekhalai*, XIII, 1, 37; *Paripāḍal* V, 1: 11, 49-54, V, 3, 1, 88 etc.; *Mullaippāṭṭu*. 11, 1-2.

[29] *Śilappadikāram* XI, 11, 47-48.

[30] *Kuraḷ*, 1103.

[31] *Nālaḍiyār*, 373.

[32] *Paripāḍal*, V, 15. 1. 55.

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[33] R. Champakalakshmi, *Vaiṣṇava Iconography in the Tamil Country*, p. 51 *fn*. 27.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 51.

2

VAIṢṆAVA ĀYUDHAPURUṢAS

It appears that the endowment of anthropomorphic forms to many *āyudhas* is one of the distinct contributions made by the late Kuṣāna and Gupta artists to Hindu iconography. From about the fifth-sixth centuries onwards the occurrence of personified *āyudhas* in art becomes more frequent first in the north and then in the south. Notwithstanding the plurality in sculptural delieneations and the typological variations exhibited by these sculptures it is rather difficult to speak of an evolved and fullfledged cult in honour of them until relatively late times. For example the cult of Sudarśana Cakra became very popular after Vedānta Deśika eulogised the Cakra in the twelfth century and the worship of Astradeva become an integral part of the temple ritual during the Cōḷa period in the Tamil country. Therefore one may not be far wrong in postulating that the *āyudhapuruṣas* noticed in early sculptures do not necessarily imply any separate cult in honour of them; it will be reasonable to hold that in early stages the personification of the weapon was only an iconographic motif.

In the depiction of these motifs one finds a richness and variety that is characteristic of Indian art and Hindu iconography. At times the weapons are personified as simple dwarfs; at times they are found as normal human beings standing against weapons like the mace and conch; in a large number of sculptures they are seen with the weapon planted on their head; in a different type of presentation they carry the weapons in their hands and are shown as attendant figures in the sculptural composition; there is also a type of depiction in which the actual *āyudha* is shown in the normal form with a relief of personification at the centre of it as in Cakkarattā̤lvār in the Tamil country and Gadādevi in a few Cāḷukyan examples; there is yet another rare and unique variety as in the image of Viṣṇu in the Ghaṭeṣvar temple at Baroli (Fig. 7) in which the god carries in one of his arms the normal weapon on whose top a human head is seen.

While some *āyudhas* are personified as male a few are shown as female and Agamic works say that the sex of *āyudha* is determined by the gender of its name in Sanskrit. As the word *gadā* denotes a feminine gender it should be personified as a beautiful woman; but as *śankha* is masculine in gender its representation is to be of the male type. The *śilpa* rules enjoin that the *cakra* due to its neuter gender should be represented as enuch, though in the realm of art it is always shown as a male figure. This classification of the *āyudhas* into male and female types and the determination of their sex by the gender of their names appears to be of considerable antiquity and definitely pre-Agamic in date because even Bhāsa (earlier than Kālidāsa) mentions *śankha* and *cakra* as males as the *gadā* and *dhanus* as females.

The incidence of Cakrapuruṣa in art starts from the fourth century onwards, one of the earliest specimens being a late Gandhāra metal image of Viṣṇu with a charming Cakrapuruṣa gazing at him.[1] Mention may also be made here of some coins of Maues, the Indo-Scythian ruler on which *vajra* is shown as a man behind whom is depicted a double-pronged thunder-bolt in front of Zeus-Indra who is shown as placing his right hand over *vajra*.[2] Representations of Cakrapuruṣa in Gupta sculptures are many. The image of Viṣṇu in the temple of Rajgir places its lower right arm on the shoulders of a male dwarf who has a 'wheel-halo' behind him revealing his identity as Cakrapuruṣa.[3] An early representation of Cakrapuruṣa and Gadādevi in a terracotta plaque, assignable to the Gupta period,[4] is in the

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[1] *Indologen Tagung*, Gottingen, W. Germany, 1959, pp. 165-178; *Indische Sculpturen*, Vol. I, plates 42-43; C. Sivaramamurthi, *Indian Bronzes*, p. 14, fig. 2.

[2] J.N. Banerjea, *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, XIV, p. 72.

[3] A. Ghosh, *A Guide to Rajgir*, 1944, plate V fig. C.; C. Sivaramamurti, 'The Weapons of Viṣṇu', *Artibus Asiae*, XVIII (2), 1955, p. 128, *fig*. 1.

[4] *Journal of U.P. Historical Research Society*, IX (2) Old series, July, 1936, p. 35.

Mathura Museum (Fig 1); in this plaque the main figure Viṣṇu is three-faced, with the face of a Narasimha at the left and Varāha at the right, the latter now being missing. The Viṣṇu and the *āyudhapuruṣās* are seated in this specimen. A late Gupta metal image of Cakrapuruṣa which presumably formed part of Viṣṇu icon from Kashmir is now in the Royal Ontario Museum at Toronto in Canada[5]; an interesting feature in this image is that it is provided with prominent mustache and curly hair and in this the image is identified with the late Gandhāra bronze referred to above. A similar device is formed in an image of about the fifth century reported from Aphsad and now in the collection of the Cleaveland Museum of Art.[6] In a number of sculptural representations from Uttar Pradesh the *āyudhapuruṣas* are shown to flank the god without any specific attribute. The Gadādevi and Cakrapuruṣa in the panel of Trimūrti in the Lucknow Museum (Fig. 2) is an example of this kind.

Mention should also be made here of a partly mutilated image of Viṣṇu in cave no. 6 at Udayagiri. On his left is a Cakrapuruṣa in the form of a dwarf to whose head (now broken) is attached the Cakra with many spokes; to the right of Viṣṇu

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[5] *Bulletin of the Royal Ontario Museum* (Art and Archaeology) Toronto, Dec. 1966, No. 24, pp. 23-26, plate 19; also Hartel, *Indolgen Tagung*, 1959, *op. cit.*, p. 177, *fig.* 59.

[6] *Handbook of Cleaveland Museum of Art*, 1958, U.S.A.; *fig.* 750.

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stands Gadādevi who is carved in the body of the *gadā* held by one of the right hands of the god. This is an interesting rock-cut example of Cakrapuruṣa and Gadādevi (Fig. 3). A rectangular figure from Kutari in the Allahabad district, now preserved in the Allahabad Museum and datable to the fifth or sixth century A.D., has the carving of Harihara; in this a Cakrapuruṣa on Viṣṇu's side and Triśūlapuruṣa on Śiva's side are shown[7] (Fig. 4). Mention may also be made of a standing Viṣṇu from Jhusi in Allahabad district, also preserved in the Allahabad Museum, in which the lower pair of arms carries a *gadā* and an 18 spoked Cakra placed on a pedestal (Fig. 5).[8] A rare example of an independent representation of Cakrapuruṣa has also been brought to light. This is a terracotta plaque from Rangmahal and now in the Bikaner Museum. In this "the dwarfish Cakrapuruṣa appears independently as a *brahmacāri*, putting on a dhoti reaching the knees; left hand placed on the thigh and right hand raised up as usual; a wheel halo has also been shown behind his head. This plaque must have been originally studded on the exterior of some early Gupta and brahmanical brick temple in the Bikaner region of ancient Sarasvati and Drsadvati rivers".[9]

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[7] *Indian Historical Quarterly*, 1960, p. 187. pl. I; Promod Chandra, *Stone Sculptures in the Allahabad Museum*, pl. LXII, p. 88.

[8] S. C. Kala, "Antiquities from Jhusi in the Allahabad Museum", *Journal of Indian Museums*, XIV-XVI (1958-60), p. 9, pl. 6 b.

[9] R.C. Agrawala, 'Chakra Purusha in Early Indian Art' *Bharatiya Vidya*, Vol. XXIV, Nos. 1-4, 1964, p. 43.

The modes of sculptural representation thus started under the Guptas were continued in the following centuries and traditions in this regard spread to the east and south. Of post-Gupta representations one must take note of the image of Viṣṇu now kept in the Junagarh Museum in which two young dwarfs hold the weapons, one the conch and the other the discus. At the back of the dwarf holding the conch is a female figure holding in her hand what looks like a *padma* with a long stalk. By the side of her forehead is suspended the *gadā* of Viṣṇu from his right arm and hence this figure can not be identified as Gadādevi; she is evidently the personified *padma* (Fig. 6). The occurrence of *padma* is rare, and where present often associated with the twenty four forms of Viṣṇu. It is also occasionaly seen in some Pallava and Cōḷa sculptures.[10] Āyudhapuruṣas of this type carrying weapons in their own hands are often found in Uttar Pradesh, Central India and Bengal. The tradition of providing a lotus flower in the arms of gods and placing the *āyudhas* of those gods on the flower was current in Bengal and this was due to the influence of Buddhist art; this tendency is reflected in a few interesting examples of Āyudhapuruṣas from Bengal who carry weapons placed on flowers;[11] side by side with the tradition of depicting the weapons over the head of personified figures was also in vogue.[12] Ṭhere is an example in the Ghateshwar temple at Baroli and that is unique in the depiction of Cakrapuruṣa; in this Viṣṇu carries a *Cakrāyudha* in his upper right arm and at the top of the *āyudha* only a human head is shown which is symbolic of personification (Fig. 7).

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[10] R. Champakalakshmi, *Vaiṣṇava Iconography in the Tamil Country*, p. 248.

[11] C. Sivaramamurti, *op. cit.*, pls. VI and VII.

[12] *Ibid.*, pl. VIII.

In the southern corridor of cave no. 16 at Ellora is a large image of Viṣṇu whose lower pair of arms are in *abhaya* and *katyavalambita* but whose upper right holds a *cakra* and upper left a long *gadā*—as long as Viṣṇu himself—and in the thick lower part of the *gadā*, *gadādevi* is carved in low relief (Fig. 8). The carving of the personified *āyudha* in the *āyudha* itself is a Cāḷukyan contribution to iconography; this was widely followed in the Tamil country while carving the *Cakkarattālvāṛ*. It is significant to note that in this case the Gadādevi alone is personified (the kneeling figure to the right of Viṣṇu with hands in *añjali* may be Garuḍā as in early examples he is shown only with a human face). However the representation of personified *gadā* are not many in south Indian art. It is extremely rare in Pallava and Pāṇḍya sculptures as Viṣṇu images of these schools show his left hand in *katyavalambita*. When *gadā* as a weapon is shown in Cōḷa sculptures its position varies depending upon the number of Viṣṇu's hands. There is a unique pair of personifed metal images of *cakra* and *gadā* of the Cōḷa period in the Madras Government Museum where the *gadā* is unconventionally represented in male form (figures 9 and 10).

Cakrapuruṣa and Cakravikrama Coin

Of the different types of Gupta coins discovered at Bayana the one with the legend *Cakravikrama* is of utmost importance. In the obverse of this type of coins the king is seen in front of a divine figure who stands on a somewhat higher elevation with an elliptical halo behind the head and offers three pellets to the king who receives it. The halo is with spokes and hence can be taken as a *cakra*. The legend on the reverse is in early Gupta characters and reads *Cakravikrama*. The coin can be attributed to Chandragupta II.

A.S. Altekar has expressed the view that the figures on the obverse represent the king receiving a boon from Viṣṇu who has a halo behind.[13] C. Sivaramamurti[14] identifies the figure with halo as *Cakrapuruṣa* as the halo has spokes. According to him "Cakravikrama may mean one possessing the valour of Cakra, or one who is valorous by wielding the *Cakra* or one who has derived his valour from *Cakra*. All the explanations can hold good and specially the last one. The king derives his valour from *Cakra* or the wheel. The wheel is the wheel of Viṣṇu".

As the figure with the wheel has only a single pair of arms it is difficult of accept A.S. Altekar's identification in preference to that of C. Sivaramamurti. Viṣṇu is nowhere shown with a single pair of arms whereas our above survey of a number of Cakrapuruṣas of the Gupta period show that the personified Cakra has only two arms though in later times the arms multiplied.

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[13] *Journal of the Numismatic Society*, X, pp. 103-4.

[14] *Ibid.*, XIII Part II, pp. 180-82.

In fact the Cakravikrama type of coin is not the only example in which the Cakra is shown in an elliptical form affording scope for the speculation that it might represent a mere halo. This is also found in the case of a *Cakrapuruṣa* in the centre of the *āsana* of a Jaina deity from Rajgir.[15] Again a similar halo is found in a Gupta sculpture in the Museum of Vangiya Sahitya Parisad and the Gunaighar Copper plate seal of Vainya Gupta;[16] though this is considered by some scholars to be a representation of Ārya Avalokiteśvara of the time of Vainya Gupta their views require reexamination in the light of the above identification of the *Cakrapuruṣa* motif in Indian art.[17]

Cakkarattaḻvār

In south India, especially in the Tamil country, the personification of *Cakra* (Sudarśana) was not a mere iconographic motif; there developed around it a cult of a nature not known in other parts of India perhaps with the exception of Bengal where also its trail was of a different type. Here the Cakrapuruṣa was depicted in a large and independent Cakra not carried by Viṣṇu but which was a cult icon by itself. This is a medieval concept which was eulogised at length by Vedānta Deśika in the twelfth century. It is to be pointed out that the development of the cult of Cakrapuruṣa in south India was in no small measure due to the devotional outpourings of this saint on the Cakra personification in the temple at Tiruvendipuram in the South Arcot district. Perhaps a century or two before the time of Vedānta Deśika was compiled the *Hayaśirṣapancarātra*, one of the most important works of *tantra* literature in *śilpa* class and in this is found the metaphysical meaning inherent in the concept of Cakra. We learn from the *Ahirbudhnya-samhita* that the *kriyaśakti* of Viṣṇu is symbolically represented by the *Sudarśana-Cakra.* In other words the *Sudarśana* represents Viṣṇu's will-to-be and is independent of time and space; it is will (*iccā*) embodied in wisdom (*prekṣa*) and resulting in action. It further describes that "as the cloth of a big banner unfolded the space is upheld by the over-purifying wind, even so *bhūti* of the nature of Viṣṇu's *śakti* from Sankarṣaṇa down to the Earth is upheld in supportless place by (His) will-to-be (Saṁkalpa)."[19] The Sudarśana *Sakti* of Viṣṇu governs the manifested nature by rewarding with food, rain etc. to those who cherish the *Satvaguna* and who indulge in *tamas* are followed by famine and the like.[20]

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[15] 15. *Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report* 1925-26, p. 125 ff; also U. P. Shah, *Studies in Jain Art*, p. 14, VI, *fig*. 18.

[16] 16. *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, XIII, 1945, pp. 49-54, pl. IV, *fig*. 54.

[17] 17. R.C. Agrawala, *op. cit*.

It is in this background that the evolution of the iconographic concept of Cakkarattāḻvar in the southern India and the development of the hieratic cult

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[18] Schrader, *Introduction to Pāncarātra*, pp. 101-02.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 107.

[20] *Ahirbudhnya Samhita*, X, 34-41.

centering round him should be viewed. It is noteworthy that he is given the honārific suffix *āḻvār* in the manner of Vaiṣṇava saints. He is one of the *parivāradevatas* in Vaiṣṇava temples and separate shrines for him are found in large temples like those at Tirupati, Śrīrangam Kāncīpuram (Varadarājasvāmi temple) etc. Many are the medieval inscriptions, recording the construction of shrines for Cakkarattaḻvār or consceration of his images or endowments for conducting worship in his shrine. An early example of this kind comes from the Citrarathavallabha Perumāḷ temple in Kuruvitturai in the Madurai district assignable to Jatāvarman Śrīvallabha of the Pāṇḍya dynasty and to the end of the eleventh century A.D.[21] In the reign of Jatāvarman Sundara Pāṇḍya who ascended the throne in A.D. 1251 a shrine for Cakkarattaḻvār was set up in the temple of Kāḷamegha Perumāḷ in Tirumōhūr in Madurai district.[22] During the reign of another Pāṇḍya ruler referred to by the title Tribhuvanacakravartin Kōnīrinmaikoṇḍāṉ two more shrines, one in the Kaḷḷaḻagar temple in Aḻagar temple in the Madurai district and the other in the Ranganātha temple at Śrīrangam are recorded to have been in existence.[23]

Viewed typologically the representations of Cakkarattāḻvār in south Indian art reveal a bewildering variety of form and complex iconography. We may note in brief here a few of the typically representative specimens. The metal icon of Sudarśana under worship in the Chennakesavapperumāḷ temple at Mallānginār in Aruppukkottai taluk of the Ramanathapuram district (Fig. 11) is a unique example showing the deity with only a single pair of arms which are in *añjali*; here the Sudarśana is shown standing on a tall pedestal with flames on the four sides with sixteen spokes in the centre. Two rampant lions on the pedestal support the Sudarśana with their heads. The personified form is found at the centre of the spokes. It is possible that the mode of depicting Sudarśana with many arms was preceded by that of endowing him with only a pair of arms and if this was so this image may be early in date and probably not much different from an Astradeva functionally.

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[21] *South Indian Inscriptions*, XIV, Nos., 223, 229, 236 and 254.
[22] *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy*, No 330 of 1919.
[23] *Ibid.*, 290 of 1929-30 and 149 of 1938-39.

In a specimen, from the Viṣṇu temple at Kapisthalame (Fig. 12) in the Thanjavur district in Tamil Nadu, we find Sudarśana with eight arms. The Kapisthalam specimen is probably assignable to about the twelfth century. He stands against the *Cakra* whose five flames are not much pronounced. He carries Vaiṣṇava attributes in his eight arms. The appearance of flames from the sides of his head in the manner of Agni is a new iconographic feature found in this which is continued in all the images of subsequent periods. In the centre of the *Cakra* and behind the Sudarśanapuruṣa is seen a diagramatic *kōna* whose appearance in an early piece of this kind seems to antedate the practice of *yantra* worship in relation to Cakkarattāḷvār. A metallic but somewhat variant example of Sudarśana with six arms assignable to the early 19th century (Fig. 13) is in the Government Museum, Madras. Yet another and well-known example of a vigorous representation of Sudarśana with sixteen arms is in the Tanjore Art Gallery, Tamil Nadu (Fig. 14). Another example from Kumbhakonam is a later piece and without the *yantra* at the back; the flames at the four sides of the Cakra and at the sides of the head of the *puruṣa* are more pronounced; above all the couple of fierce teeth shown from the mouth of this deity is an interesting trait.(Fig. 15)

In a large number of examples Cakkarttāḷvar is shown with sixteen arms. Examples of Sudarśana wherein the figure has four, eight or sixteen arms with the upper pair holding *śankha* and *cakra* are taken to be Viṣṇu himself. Regarding the weapons to be provided for these arms the Āgamas, mention *cakra*, *śankha*, *dhanus*, *paraśū*, *asi* (sword), *bāṇa*, *śūla*, *pāśa*, *aṅkuśa*, *agni*, *khaḍga*, *khetaka*, *hala*, *musala*, *gadā* and *kunta*. Of the many sculptural examples conforming to this description mention may be made here of specimens from the temples at Tādikkombu (Fig. 16), Kaṇḍiyūr (Fig. 17), Mōhūr (Fig. 18), Āḷvārtirunagari (Fig. 19), Śrīrangam ((Fig. 20), Tirumayyam (Fig. 21) and Kaḷḷakkurichi (Fig. 22). Those from Mōhūr, Kaṇḍiyūr and Tirumayyam are in stone and the rest are in metal. It is noteworthy that in none of these stone carvings

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24. T.A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. I, Pt. I., p. 290.

flames appear at the four sides of the *Cakra* while they are prominently found in metal icons. Four, eight and thirtytwo flames are noticed in the bronze images respectively from Āḻvārtırunagari, Kaḻḻakkurichi and Śrīrangam. It is also noteworthy that most of the sixteen-armed Sudarśanapuruṣas, those mentioned here and countless number of others under worship in temples throughout south India, depict movement in action which is symbolic of the movement of the Cakra. In the sixteen arms of this god one finds almost all the important attributes and weapons of all the Hindu gods, both Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava. In certain example the figure of a Narasimha in normal or *yogic* form is found on a *trikōna* at the reverse side of the Āyudhapuruṣa. These are significant instances of a sort of an integration of one's chief deity with that of an Āyudhapuruṣa. Instances of this kind belong mostly to the Vijayanagara period (15th-17th centuries) when Vaiṣṇava religious cults in general and the worship of Narasimha in particular appear to have received impetus.

Association of Ayudhapuruṣas with Anantasāyi

In the iconographic scheme of Anantasāyi representations of Āyudhapuruṣas constitute an important group, the other associated images being Mārkaṇḍeya, Bhṛgu, Agni, Garuḍa, Brahma, Varuṇa, Bhūdevi, Srīdevi, Śiva, Dakṣa, Nārada, Tumbūru, the seven *ṛṣis*, the twin Aświns, Sanakādi Yogis, Sūrya, Candra, the demons Madhu and Kaiṭabha etc.[25] In its description of the Anantaśāyi form the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa* mentions the presence near the god of the personified forms of five weapons—Pāñcajañya, Sudarśana, Nandaka, Kaumodaki and Śārṅga (the conch, discus, sword, mace and bow). The *Vaikhānasāgama* and the *Vimānārcanakalpa* which speak of the Yogaśayana, Bhogaśayana, Vīraśayana and Ābhicārikaśayana forms of Anantaśāyi stipulates the representation of the five weapons in all the first three forms; the fourth form, a typical representation of which is the carving in the Shore Temple complex at Mahābalipuram in Tamil Nadu, has neither the Āyudhapuruṣas nor any other subsidiary figures nearby.

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[25] K.V. Sundararajan, 'The Typology of Anantasayi Icon', *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. XXIX pp. 67-82.

The representation of Anantaśāyi is frequent in Indian art and one of the earliest examples is the one at Udayagiri. In north India this form is also found at Deogarh (circa 500 A.D.) and Badoli (now in the Kotah Museum and datable to circa 850 A.D.). Comparatively the incidence of this form in Deccanese and south Indian art and iconographic types is more frequent. They are for instance found at Aihole (c. 525 A.D.), Bādāmi (Caves I and II datable to circa 575 and another specimen near the tank datable to circa 800 A.D.), Bhokardam (c. 700 A.D.), Ellora (Caves XV datable to circa 750 A.D. and XXVII which is earlier and datable to circa 700 A.D.), Pātāleśvara cave near Poona (circa 800 A.D.), Mahābalipuram (Shore Temple complex and Anantaśāyi cave datable to circa 650 A.D.), Malayaḍippaṭṭi (circa 775 A.D). Nāmakkal (c. 745 A.D.), Singavaram (c. 700 A.D.) Śrīvilliputtūr

(c. 775 A.D.), Tirukkoṣtiyur (c. 775 A.D.) Tirumayyam (c. 750 A.D.), Tiruppullāṇi (c. 750 A.D.), Tiruttangal (c. 675 A.D.), Tiruvallur (c. 750 A.D.), Tiruvekha (700 A.D.), Toṇḍūr (c. 750 A.D.), Tiruchur (mural painting of the late medieval period) and Uṇḍavalli (c. 650 A.D.). They are also found at Kumbhakonam (c. 675 A.D.), Tirupati (medieval period), Śrīrangam (c. 650 A.D.) and Trivandrum (medieval period). The dates given here are based upon evidences to indicate that though the extant images in some of these places are late they must be duplicates of old originals which can be on traditional and other grounds traced back to the time provided in brackets.[26]

Now, of these many places Āyudhapuruṣas are shown in the company of Anantaśāyi only at Deogarh (Fig. 23) and Udayagiri in north India and Bādaṁi (Fig. 24), Ellora, Malayaḍippaṭṭi, Nāmakkal, Śrīvilliputtūr, Tirukkoṣtiyūr, Tirumayyam, Tiruppullāṇi, Kumbhakonam, Tiruttangal, Tiruvekha Tiruchur and Uṇḍavalli in south India. The god at Singavaram is an exceptional example in which only two of the five Āyudhas are personified. In the Atiya cave of Ranganātha at Nāmakkal it is possible to check the iconographic scheme with the help of a contemporary inscription which names all the represented figures.[27]

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[26] *Ibid.*, pp. 83-84.

[27] *Epigrapdia Indica*, XXXVI, iv, p. 131.

The depiction of the Āyudhapuruṣas in the Anantaśāyi panel in the Mahiṣamardhani cave at Mahābalipuram calls for special remarks (Fig. 25). The representation of the god here may be said to be an incipient form of Yogaśayanamūrti as he is two armed. At his feet are the demons Madhu and Kaiṭaba. Bhūdevi is kneeling at the feet of Anantaśāyi and in front of her are two figures who have been identified as Mārkaṇḍeya and Bhṛgu by Gopinatha Rao[28] and Sudarśana and Nandaka by Sivāramamurti.[29] Above Viṣṇu are two flying figures who are taken to be the dwarfish Pāñcajanya (conch) and Kaumōdakī (gadā). K.R. Srinivasan, however, feels that this Anantaśāyi panel was inspired by the *Devimahātmya* tradition which speaks of the *yoganidra* of Viṣṇu and the story of the slaying of Mahiśāsura by Devi. He also points out to the proximity of Anantaśāyi and Mahiṣamardani in sculptural representations as in the Mahiṣamardani cave at Mahābalipuram and other places in the extreme south. He therefore identifies the flying female figure at the top as "the personification of contemplative sleep (*yoganidra*), which form Śakti had assumed and by entering into Viṣṇu made him lapse into half-slumber and half-contemplation at the end of the *yuga*."[30]

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[28] T.A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, pt. I, pp. 109-10.

[29] C. Sivaramamurti, *Mahabalipuram*, p. 22.

[30] K. R. Srinivasan, *Cave Temples of the Pallavas*, p. 155. For a similar view expressed earlier see P. Trivikrama Narayanan, *A Guide to Mahabalipuram*, p. 30.

The identification of the figure made by K. V. Soundararajan is different.[31] He refutes the possibility of any influence by the *Devimahātmya* on the sculptural theme and expresses the view that the hovering images above the god are personifications of conch and mace; The kneeling figure at the bottom whose legs are hidden below mid-thigh is Varuṇa and that the other kneeling figure nearby is Mārkaṇḍeya. Now, on the *makuta* of this supposed Mārkaṇḍeya is seen a circular object not dissimilar to Cakra found on the head of Āyudhapuruṣas from other places. Therefore it may not be possible to agree with the view that this figure is that of Mārkaṇḍeya though the view that the hovering figure has nothing to do with the *Devimahātmya* tradition is acceptable. If thus one of the kneeling figures is Sudarśana, the male hovering above can not be a duplication of another Cakrapuruṣa in the same sculptural composition. He may therefore to be identified with Pāñcajanya, the accompanying female being Gadādevi.[32] If this be so the male figure by the side of Sudarśana may be Nandaka (sword). The representation of the Anantaśāyi form in this cave is interesting from more than one point of view. We have here only four of the five *āyudhas* and other figures like Brahma, Mārkaṇḍeya,

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[31] K.V. Sundararajan, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-78.

[32] We have already noticed that in a rare example Kaumōdaki is represented as male (Fig. 10).

Bhṛgu, the *ṛiṣis*, Aśvins etc. are also absent. The presence of at least four Āyudhapuruṣas when read along with the striking absence of other important figures who normally constitute the full composition of the Anantaśāyi theme in art seems to invest them with some rarity.

3

ŚAIVA ĀYUDHAPURUṢAS

Like the weapons of Viṣṇu those of Śiva, and other Śaiva deities like *triśūla*, *paraśu*, *vajra*, *śakti*, *daṇḍa*, *khaḍga*, *pāsa*, *aṅkuśa*, *dhvaja* etc. are described in the Śilpa texts as befitting personification. Iconographic details regarding concretised images of these weapons are found in the *Uttarakāmikāgama*, *Viṣṇudharmottara*, *Pūrvakaraṇāgama* etc. But in the realm of art personified Śaiva weapons are not as largely represented as those of Vaiṣṇava *āyudhas*, though their examples are not altogether wanting. Among these the most important is *triśūla* not only because it is one of the primary weapons and chief iconographic cognizances of Śiva but also due to the fact that its personified form is found more often than the other weapons of Śiva and other Śaiva deities.

We may now briefly consider some of the sculptural representations of *triśūlapuruṣa* and try to find out what light they throw on certain yet unknown features of Śaiva religious cults. One such representation is found in an image in the door jamb in the temple of Bharateswar (or Satrughneswar ?) at Bhuvaneswar (Fig. 26). The image is a door guardian and four-armed. His left pair of arms is mutilated and only the right pair remains in tact. The upper right arm touches the hood of a serpent that issues from the *sarpakuṇḍala* in his right ear; his lower right hand rests on his weapon *triśūla* which is peculiarly personified as a standing dwarf. Over the head of the dwarf are the three prongs of the *triśūla*; the lower part of the *triśūla* consisting of a stem pierces his head and throat and is shown in front of him; he holds it by his hands. This *triśūlapuruṣa* has a benign and juvenile countenance, circular *kuṇḍalas* and finely arranged headdress. His decoration is sparse and there is no indication of any costume on his body. This is one of the earliest examples of *triśūlapuruṣa* in Indian art and similar instances are found in a few other temples at Bhuvaneswar. These indicate the prevalence and popularity of the *triśūlapuruṣa* motif in the early art of the Kalinga region.

Another example clossely resembling this image from Bhuvaneswar comes from Mukhalingam in the present Andhra Pradesh which was with in the periphery of Kalinga artistic influence (Fig. 27). In this the main figure is presumably Śiva with four arms, the upper pair carrying a rosary and a flower bud, the lower left hand holding a circular object (fruit ?) and the lower right arm resting on the prongs of the *triśūla* planted on the head of a dwarf. In this image also the dwarf is shown with two arms which are held crossed over the chest. He wears circular *kuṇḍalas* and a necklace of pearls. His head is nicely combed and in the centre of the head the *āyudha* is planted. Though similar in major details this *triśūlapuruṣa* differs from the specimen from Bhuvaneswar in one respect; the stem part of the *āyudha* which is to be seen immediately below the three prongs is not shown in this. These two are recondite examples of plastic versions of *triśūlapuruṣas* in pre-medieval Kalinga and areas adjacent to it. In the art of sculpture, representations of forms fully analoguous to these becomes rare after about the ninth century.

A variant typological representation is illustrated by an image of Śiva, now in the Nagpur Museum, and probably found in the Vidarbha region (Fig. 28). In this Śiva is the main figure. He is standing with two pairs of arms, the upper pair holding a *triśūla* on the right and three-hooded serpent on the left sides; from the palm of his lower right arm is suspended a rosary and by two fingers in his lower left hand he holds the neck of a spouted *kuṇḍika.* As rosary and *kuṇḍika* are associated with this image one may suggest that Śiva in this form represents *jñāna*; this gets further support from the fact that the eyes are almost closed indicating his absorption in meditation. On either side of this god are found a dwarfish male figure and to the back of each stands a female. The male dwarf in the proper right side of Śiva holds *triśūla* in his left arm while his right arm is placed near his hip. He can be identified with *triśūlapuruṣa.*

It is significant to note that unlike the examples from the Kalinga region noticed above, the *triśūla* in the Nagpur Museum is not planted on the head of the *puruṣa* but is held by him in his arm. Reference has been made in the previous chapter to similar representations of *śankha* and *cakra*. This is only a Śaiva version of the same practice which probably followed an earlier tradition of piercing the *āyudha* in the head of the dwarf. This *āyudhapuruṣa* is decorated with a garland of pearls, an *yajñopavīta*, *vaḷayas* and armlets of pearls etc. besides a full dhoti which extends upto the feet. The decoration of the *āyudhapuruṣa* in consonance with that of the main figure is a development discernible from this image.

If traditions regarding sculptural delineations of *triśūlapuruṣas* were thus evolving and developing in eastern and central India, the Cāḷukya-Rāṣṭrakūta regions in the Deccan were experimenting differently from comparatively early times. In fact this region has been a veritable centre of iconographic experiments from where many nuances and traditions in Hindu iconography have spread to many distant areas. One such tradition is the depiction of *dvārapālakas* as *triśūlapuruṣas*. This is borne out by many images in the temples built by Cāḷukya and early Rāstrakūṭa rulers and as an example we may take the sculpture of a *dvārapalaka* in the Virūpākṣa temple at Paṭṭaḍakkal (Fig. 29).

This *dvārapālaka*, like many other images of similar kind, is four-armed. The weapon in the upper right hand is not clear while by the corresponding arm on the other side he carries a *triśūla*; the lower right hand is placed near his hip and the lower left is in *katyavalambita*. His left leg is erect on the ground and the right leg is bent and crossed to left. His *makuta* is of the *karanda* variety with elaborate frontal decoration. Behind this *makuta* are shown the three prongs of the *triśūla* very prominently. This depiction in addition to the trident held hy him in his upper left hand reveals his identity as *triśūlapuruṣa*. The endowment of this new character to the door guardian is distinctly a Cāḷukyan contribution to Hindu iconography. In later examples from both the Cāḷukyan areas and regions south of it one can find the development of this tradition. One of the less known but typically illustrative of this is the image of *dvārapālaka* from Kāvērippakkam in the North Arcot district, Tamil Nadu wherein a blending of Cāḷukya and Pallava decorative details is conspicuously seen (Fig. 30). In the famous temple of Bṛhadīśvara at Thanjavur built by Cōḷa Rājarāja I (985–1014 A.D.) many sets of large *dvārapālakas* are found flanking the main and side entrances; and on the head of all the door guardians one finds *triśūlā* or some other Śaiva weapon (Figs. 31 and 32).

In fact even on the heads of the *dvārapālakas* flanking the shrine of Subrahmaṇya in the *prākāra* of the temple one finds the planting of *śakti* and *vajra*, weapons of Subrahmaṇya (Fig. 33). This shrine of Subrahmaṇya was an addition made during the period of the Nāyak rulers in the eighteenth century and hence very late; but the sculptor who has carved the images of *dvarāpalākas* of this shrine has adopted the *āyudhaspuruṣa* nature of the door guardians in the main temple. It is equally possible that there was a tradition of personifying the weapons of god as door guardians in front of the shrine of that god. In the Lāḍankōvil, a rock-cut shrine near the cave temple at Ānaimalai in the Madurai district in Tamil Nadu are found sculptural depictions of the peacock and cock *dhvajas* on either side of the shrine of Subrahmaṇya. This cave has been assigned to the ninth century A.D[1] and hence this plastic delineation of the *dhvajas* may be explained as a Pāṇḍyan rendering of a Cāḷukyan practice with a difference. The former substituted the *dhvajas* for the *āyudhas* in this unusual and interesting example.

Incidentally it may be noted that there are a number of *dvārapālakas* in whom only the two side prongs of the *triśūla* are found and not the central prong. These two side prongs issue from the two sides of head, a little above the ears. Instances of this kind are often found in the *dvārapālakas* in the cave and early structural temples in south India. Once it was thought that the presence of *dvārapālakas* of this kind mark them out to be of Pallava authorship. But recent studies have shown that this feature is present in many non–Pallava caves excavated by Pāṇḍyas and Muttaraiyars in the south and Cālukyas and Rāṣtrakūṭas in the Deccan besides the one in Bhairavakoṇḍa, Andhra Pradesh. The side prongs of the *dvārapālakas* have been taken by some to be horn and hence the door guardians are described as horned *dvārapālakas*. A suggestion has been made that they may represent the personified form of Nandi.[2] In such expressions as *Kuḍamul̤a Nandīśan̤ai Vāśakanāgakkoṇḍār* and *Nandi Mākāḷan en̤bār nuḍuvuḍaiyārkaḷ nir̤pa* Appar, the Tamil hymnist of the seventh century A.D., mentions Nandi and Mahākāḷa as door keepers which confirms the above identifications. However, the *dvārapālaka* from Paṭṭaḍakkal is evidently a *triśūlapuruṣa* as we find unmistakable and large representation of the *triśūla* on the head. Though the practice of depicting door guardians as personified weapons was not current in the Pallava period in the Tamil country its currency in later times is borne out by some examples including the Thanjavur *dvārapālakas* mentioned above.

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[1] K.R. Srinivasan, "Some Aspects of Religion as Revealed by Early Monuments and Literature of the South," *Journal of the Madras University*, Vol. XXXII, No. 1, p. 176.

Another and unique method of *āyudha* worship often in association with *triśūla* is related to the veneration of Astradevas. There is hardly a Śiva temple in south India where the Astradeva in bronze is not to be found. In this we find the three prongs of the *śūla*; attached to the central prong or just below it is some deity, invariably a fierce Kāḷi or Śiva as Vṛṣabhārūḍa, Ūmāsahita etc.

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[2] *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy*, 1921-22, Part I, pp 3-4.

This is one of the important objects of adoration in the temple to which regular worship is offered. In a protocal system followed in temples this image is taken out in processions in advance of the processional icon (*utsavamūrti*) of the main deity of the temple during festivals. In many inscriptions we hear of the making and dedication of these Astradevas and endowments for conducting their worship. For example an inscription from Āvūr in Tiruvaṇṇāmalai taluk in North Arcot district in Tamil Nadu which provides certain astronomical details pointing to A.D. 1272, September 29, Thursday, as its date, records the setting up of an image of Astradeva during the administration of Śūrāṇḍār *alias* Jeyaśevakoñ—Cēḍiyarāyar in the temple of Tiruvagatīśvaramuḍaiya Nāyanār at Āvūr.[3] If the image shown in the *śūla* is that of a Kāḷi or Piḍāri it is called Śūlappiḍāri.

One of the representative examples of Śūlappiḍāri is under worship in the temple at Viḷidiyūr in the Pondicherry State (Fig. 34). In this the two side prongs of the *śūla* are almost circular but for their top portions. The central prong has its two ends sharpened. All the three prongs are connected by a metallic line. On the pedestal of the *śūla* is placed another pedestal on which is seated a four-armed Piḍāri. Her appearance is fierce which is highlighted by the flames of fire issuing from her hair. In her lower arms she holds a *triśūla* and skull cup and in upper arms *pāśa* and what appears to be *ḍamaru*. She wears a *kūcabandha*, *hāras*, *vaḷayas* etc. The image is datable to the eleventh-twelfth centuries. A more beautiful and probably somewhat earlier Śūlappiḍāri in which the goddess is shown in standing posture with four arms is in the Madras Museum (Fig. 35).

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[3] 291 of 1919; *South Indian Inscriptions*, XII, No. 236.

Another example of an Astradeva is from Tirumaṇañjēri in Mayavaram taluk in Thanjavur district in Tamil Nadu (Fig. 36). In the *triśūla* of this figure four-armed Śiva is in the company of Umā, both standing with the *vāhana* bull. In his upper hands Śiva carries an axe and an antelope while his lower right hand is placed on the head of the *ṛṣabha* and lower right arm is stretched to the hip of Pārvati. The image can therefore be identified as Ālingana-Vṛṣabhāṇḍika. The association of this *saumyamūrti* with the *āyudha* is interesting. This Astradeva cult is one of the significant and noteworthy ramifications of the *āyudhapuruṣa* worship in south India. In yet another example from Sikkil in Thanjavur district, Tamil Nadu, Śiva is shown as Vṛṣabhārūḍa in the *sūla* (Fig. 37).

Though *khaṭvānga*—a weapon in the form of an iron stick with a skull at the top—is only rarely associated with Śiva in sculptures we find a considerable number of sculptural representations of personified *khaṭvānga* in the company of Śiva. We may consider here only two such representations in both of which Śiva is not in his terrific form. The first image is that of Śiva in the Nagpur Museum already referred to in discussing *triśūlapuruṣas*; it has been shown that the male dwarf standing to the proper right of Śiva is *trisūlapuruṣa* for the reason that he carries in his right arm a *triśūla*. The dwarfish figure in the proper left of the figure carries in his right arm a *khaṭvānga* and hence can be identified as *khaṭvāngapuruṣa*. His left hand is in *lola* attitude. He also wears *yajñopavita*, two *hāras*, *vaḷayas* etc. His countenance is juvenile and calm.

The second example is seen in a sculpture of Śiva and Pārvati from Tumain, now in the Gwalior Museum (Fig. 38). S. K. Thakore assigns this image to the fifth century A.D. and describes it as follows : "Lakulīśa seated on Nandi with Pārvati on his left thigh and Kumāra riding on peacock to her left; holds *triśūla* in right hand." The date assigned seems to be too early for this image; apart from this the description provided does not give any indication of the most interesting feature noticed in this sculpture, *viz*. the representation of the *Khaṭvāṅgapuruṣa*. He is shown as an elegant male figure standing on the proper right side of Śiva who is turning to Pārvati with his arm stretched to her shoulders and her arm stretched to his shoulders. In the corresponding place on the proper left side of Śiva is also an *āyudhapuruṣa* who may be a *triśūlapuruṣa*. The skull attached to the *khaṭvānga* is not as terrific as the one noticed in the example mentioned above. This may be placed in the late Gupta period which warrants the assumption that even during the sixth century A.D. the practice of depicting Śaiva weapons also was current in north India.

Agamic Injunctions

According to Agamic texts *triśūla* should be a handsome and black figure with beautiful brows. The *śakti* which is a female figure must be red in colour with wolf as (*vṛika*) as its *vāhana*. The *daṇḍa* must be a male, black in colour; his eyes should be red and indicate a fierce look. A similar description is given for the *khaḍga*. The *pāśa* is described as a male snake with seven hoods. The *dhvaja* is also a male, yellow in colour and with his mouth open. The *heti*, which according to Gopinatha Rao is a weapon like hatchet, should be shown as a female. The other *āyudhas* to be personified as a male are the *bhindi*, the sling with which stone are thrown and the *bāṇa* which should have a red body and beautiful eyes. The iconographic account of the *bāṇa* given in the *Vaikhānasāgama* is different according to which he is "a *napumsaka* -an eunuch-and should be of black complexion with three eyes, should be draped in white clothes and capable of producing the fearful noise of the sea. The *vāhana* or vehicle of this personified weapon is wind, *vāyu*, and its banner is the feather. It must carry an actual arrow on its head. The birth star of *bāṇa* whatever it means, is given as *Śatabhiṣang nakṣatra* in the month Māgha and its *bījākṣara* is said to be *Sa*." This rather lengthy description of the *bāṇa* in the *Vaikhānasāgama* no doubt points to its significance among the *āyudhapuruṣas* though no sculptural representation of this has so far been reported. The *dhanus* is said to be a female figure with a stringed bow on her head. Her complexion should be red like the lotus flower.

The philosophical significance of and the metaphysical meaning conveyed through the different *āyudhas* have been explained in the *Kāmikāgama* and a few Śaiva Āgamas. It is said that "the *triśūla* indicates the three *guṇas* of *prakriti* respectively called *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. The *paraśu* represents Śiva's divine strength and power (*śakti*); the *khaḍga*, his valour; *vāhni* (fire) his *samhāra śakti* or power of destruction; this last one, namely, the *vāhni* is further conceived to destroy all *pāśas* or bonds and attachments, and is consequently emblematic of the enlightenment which comes after the bonds of sin and sorrow are broken asunder and destroyed. The *nāgas* serving as ornaments on his body show the fortitude of Śiva as also the inviolability of *vidhi*, or his commandments and laws. The *pāśa* which is a threefold cord or rope, indicates the threefold bondage of incarnated life consisting of *karmā*, *māyā* and *mala*, that is, of work, delusion and impurity. The *ghanta* (bell) is the symbol of sound looked upon as the original cause of creation and is, indicative of the *mantra-svarūpa* of Śiva which is his mystic sound-form. The *aṅkuśa* stands for the selective faculty in choosing what is enjoyable for the *atman* as soul."[4]

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[4] T. A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 293-94.

Appendix

ICONOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTIONS OF ĀYUDHAPURUṢAS[1]

Uttarakāmikāgama

दशायुधप्रतिष्ठां तु वक्ष्ये लक्षणपूर्वकम् ।
वज्रं शक्तिं[2] च दण्डं च खड्गं पाशं तथाङ्कुशम् ॥

गदा त्रिशूलं पद्मं च चक्रं चेति दशायुधम् ।
एकवक्त्रं द्विनेत्रं च करण्डमकुटान्वितम् ॥

कृताञ्जलिपुटोपेतं द्विबाहुं सर्वलक्षणम् ।
प्रतिमालक्षणप्रोक्तमानेनैव समाचरेत् ॥

जाये शक्तिगदे ज्ञेये चक्रपद्मे नपुंसके ।
शेषाः पुमांसो विज्ञेयास्त्वष्टतालविनिर्मिताः ॥

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[1] From T.A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. I, Part II, pp. 77-80.

[2] शक्तिश्चेति भवितव्यम् ।

स्वमूर्तायुधसंयुक्तास्स्वक्रिया[3]देकतालतः ।
तालाष्टांशविवृद्धया तु चतुस्तालावसानकम् ।।

कल्पयेदायुधं विद्वानस्त्रवर्गोक्तमार्गतः ।
तेषां मूर्ध्न्यायुधं कार्यमथवा मकुटोपरि ।।

हस्तयोरन्तरे वापि वामेतरकरेऽपि वा ।
परित्यज्याङ्कुशं यद्वा तत्स्थाने कल्पयेड्बजम् ।।

Viṣṇudharmottara

शक्तिस्तु योषिदाकारा लोहिताङ्गी वृकाश्रिता ।
दण्डोऽपि पुरुषः कृष्णो घोरो लोहितलोचनः ।।

खड्गश्च पुरुषश्श्यामशरीरः क्रुद्धलोचनः ।
पाशस्सप्तफणस्सर्पपुरुषः पुच्छसंयुतः ।।

ध्वजस्तु पुरुषः पीतो व्यावृतास्यो महाबलः ।
गदा पीतप्रभा कन्या सुपीनजघनस्थला ।।

त्रिशूलं पुरुषो दिव्यस्सुभ्रूश्श्यामकलेबरः ।
शङ्खोऽपि पुरुषो दिव्यश्शुक्लाङ्गश्शुभलोचनः ।।

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[3] स्वकीयादिति भवितव्यम् ।

हेतिर्बहुतिथी (?) सा स्त्री भिन्दिश्श्यामतनुः पुमान् ।
शरस्स्यात्पुरुषो दिव्यो रक्ताङ्गो दिव्यलोचनः ॥

धनुस्स्त्री पद्मरक्ताभा मूर्ध्नि पूरितचापभृत् ।
एवमस्त्राणि पूतानि जानीयात्परमेश्वरे ॥

उक्तानां चैव सर्वेषां मूर्ध्नि स्वायुधलाञ्छनम् ।
भुजौ द्वौ तु प्रकर्तव्यौ स्कन्दलग्नौ[4] सदा बुधैः ।

Pūrvakāraṇāgama

वज्रं शक्ति[5] च दण्डं च खड्गं पाशं तथाङ्कुशम् ।
गदा त्रिशूलं चक्रं च पद्मं चेति दशायुधम् ॥

द्विभुजाश्च द्विनेत्राश्च सर्वाभरणसंयुताः ।
कृताञ्जलिपुटोपेताः करण्डमकुटान्विताः ॥

तत्तद्वक्त्रप्रमाणेन अस्त्रमूर्तिसमन्विताः ।
नानावर्णसमायुक्तं नीलजीमूतवर्णकम् ॥

नीलकं पद्मरागं च तुषारं चेन्द्रनीलकम् ।
शारदाभ्रं च रक्तं च वज्रादीनां तु वर्णकम् ॥

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4. स्कन्धलग्नाविति भवितव्यम् ।
5. शक्तिश्चेति भवितव्यम् ।

जाया[6] शक्तिगदा विद्यात्पाशपद्मे नपुंसके ।
शेषाः पुमानिति ख्याताः कीर्तितास्त्वस्त्रमूर्तयः ।।

On Sudarśana Puruṣa

Śilparatna

चक्रं शङ्खं च चापं परशुमसिमिषुं शूलपाशाङ्कुशाग्निं
विभ्राणं खड्गखेटं हलमुसलगदाकुन्तमत्युग्रदंष्ट्रम् ।

ज्वालाकेशं त्रिनेत्रं कनकमयलसद्गात्रमत्युग्ररूपं
वन्दे षट्कोणसंस्थं सकलरिपुजनप्राणसंहारचक्रम् ।।

Sudarśanasataka

ज्योतिश्चूडालमौलिस्त्रिनयनवदनष्षोडशोत्तुङ्गबाहुः
प्रत्यालीढेन तिष्ठन्प्रणवशशधराधारषट्कोणवर्ती ।

निस्सीमेन स्वभूम्ना निखिलमपि जगत्क्षेमवन्निर्मिमाणो
भूयात्सौदर्शनो वः प्रतिभटपरुषः पूरुषः पौरुषाय ।।७५।।

उग्रंपश्याक्षमुद्यद्भ्रुकुटि समकुटं कुण्डलि स्पष्टंदष्ट्रं
चण्डास्त्रैर्बाहुदण्डैर्लसदनलसमक्षौमलक्ष्योरुकाण्डम् ।

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[6] जाये शक्तिगदे इति भवितव्यम् ।

प्रत्यालीढस्थपादं प्रथयतु भवतां पालनव्यग्रमग्रे
चक्रेशोऽकालकालेरितभटविकटाटोपलोपाय रूपम् ॥७९॥

चक्रं कुन्तं कृपाणं परशुहुतवहावङ्कुशं दण्डशक्ती
शङ्खं कोदण्डपाशौ हलमुसलगदा वज्रशूलांश्च हेतीन् ।
दोर्भिस्सव्यापसव्यैर्दधदतुलबलस्तम्भितारातिदर्पं-
र्व्यूहस्तेजोऽभिमानी नरकविजयिनो जृम्भतां संपदे वः ॥८०॥

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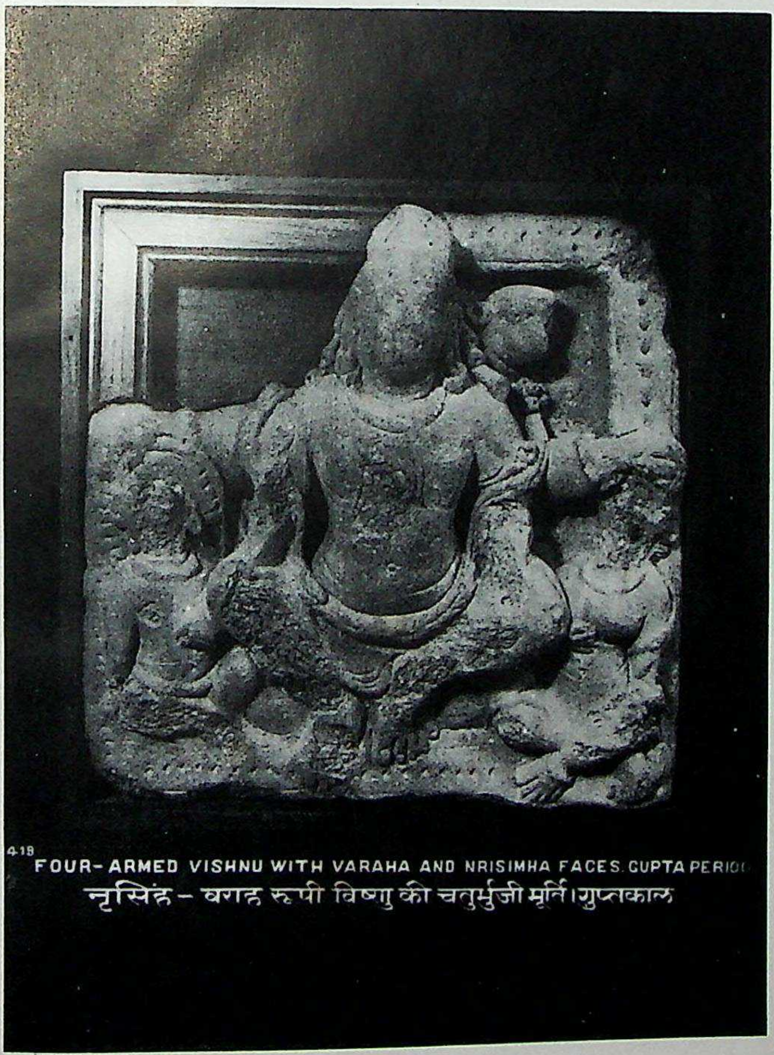
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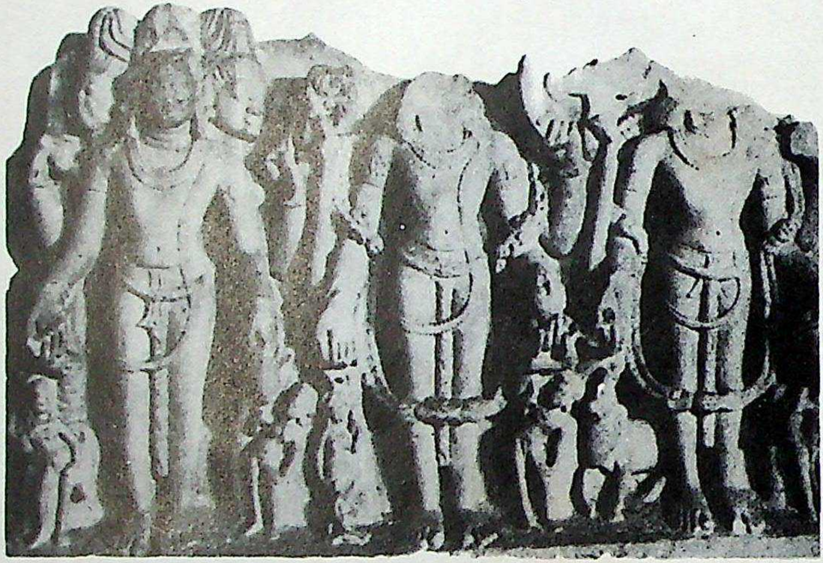
FOUR-ARMED VISHNU WITH VARAHA AND NRISIMHA FACES. GUPTA PERIO
नृसिंह - वराह रूपी विष्णु की चतुर्भुजी मूर्ति। गुप्तकाल

Fig. 1



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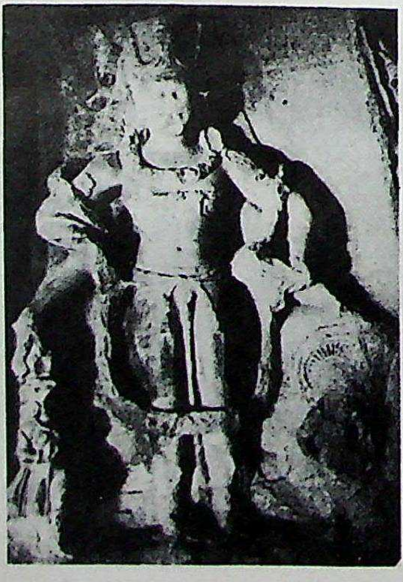

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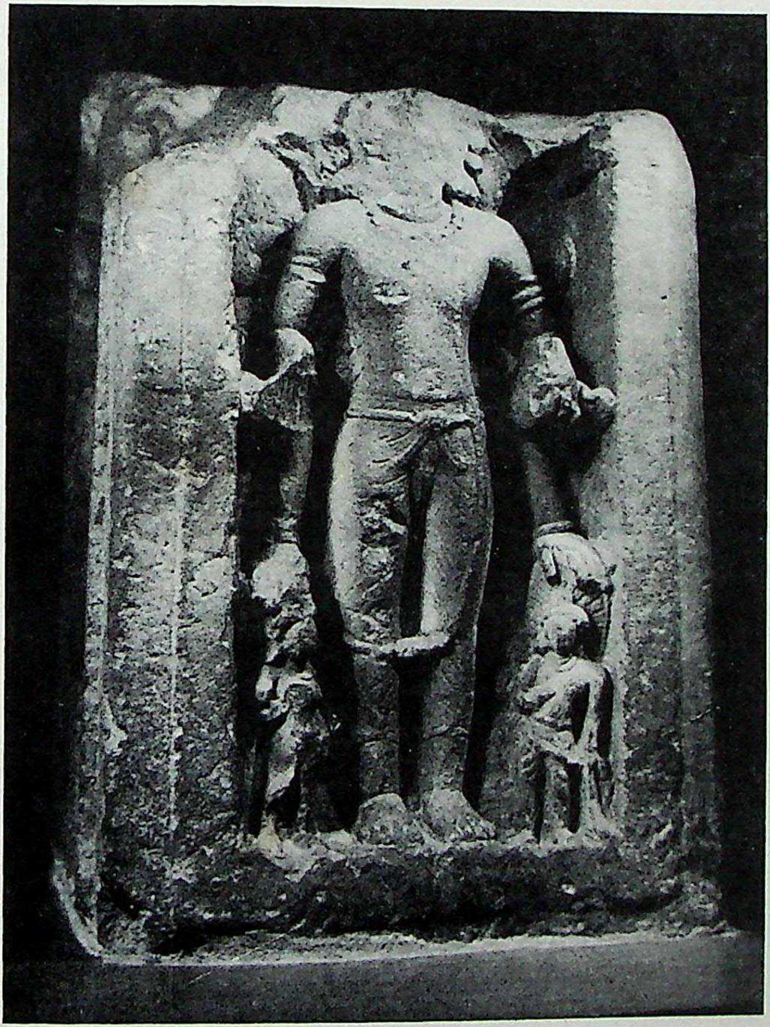

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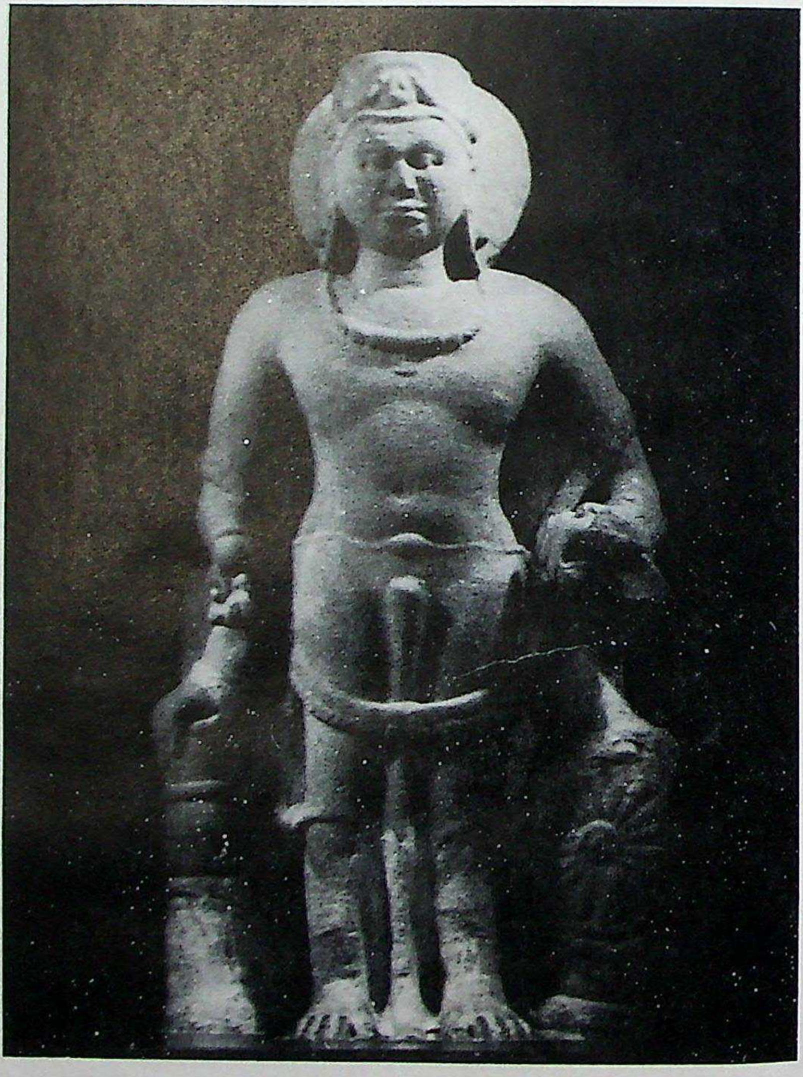

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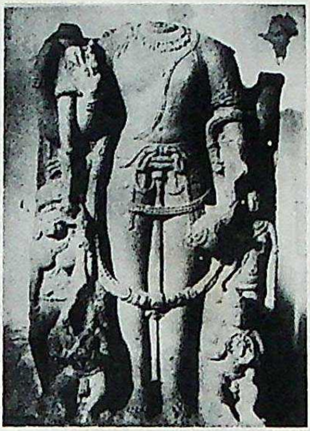

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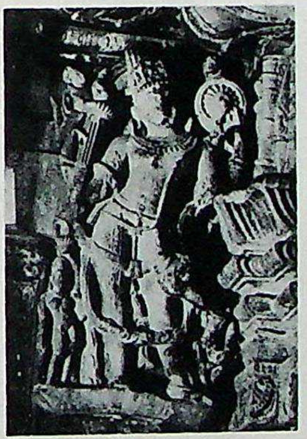

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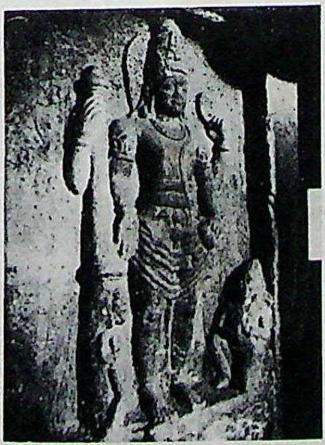

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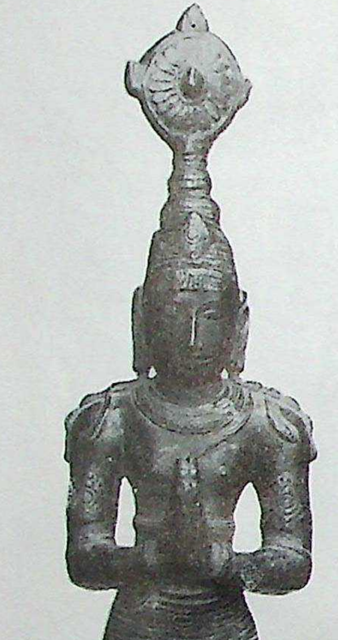

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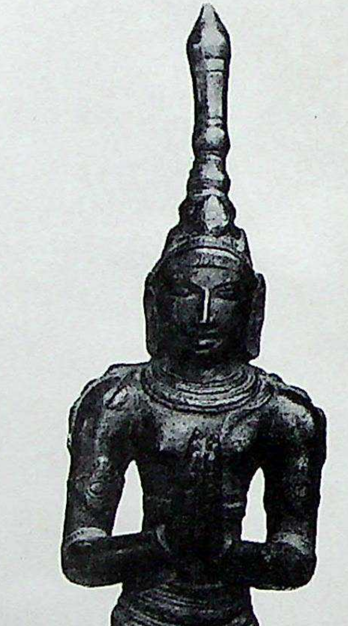

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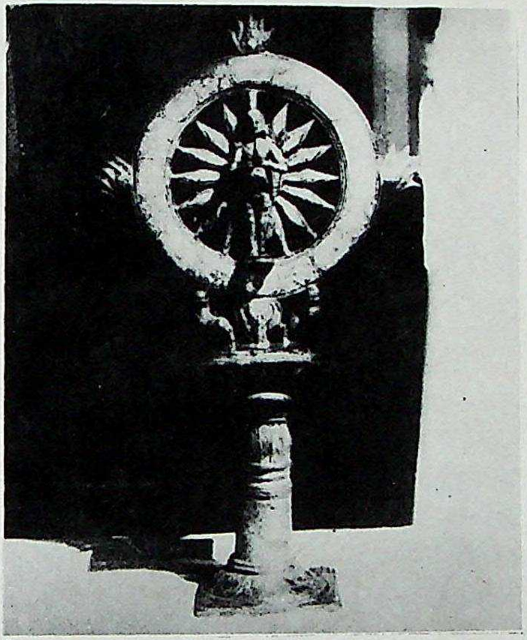

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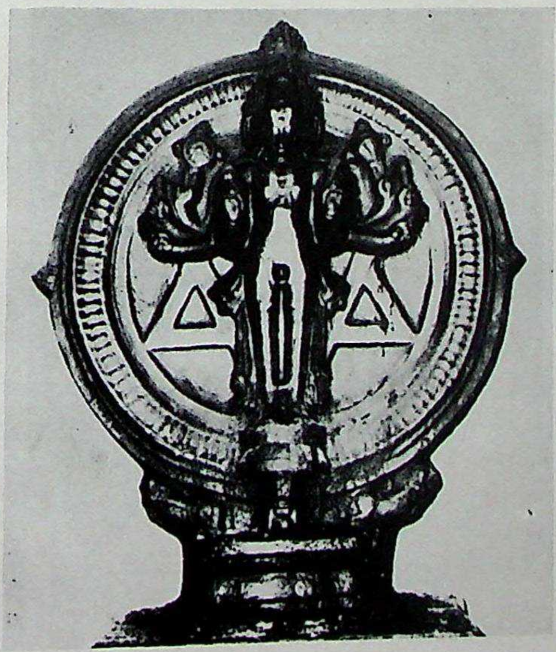

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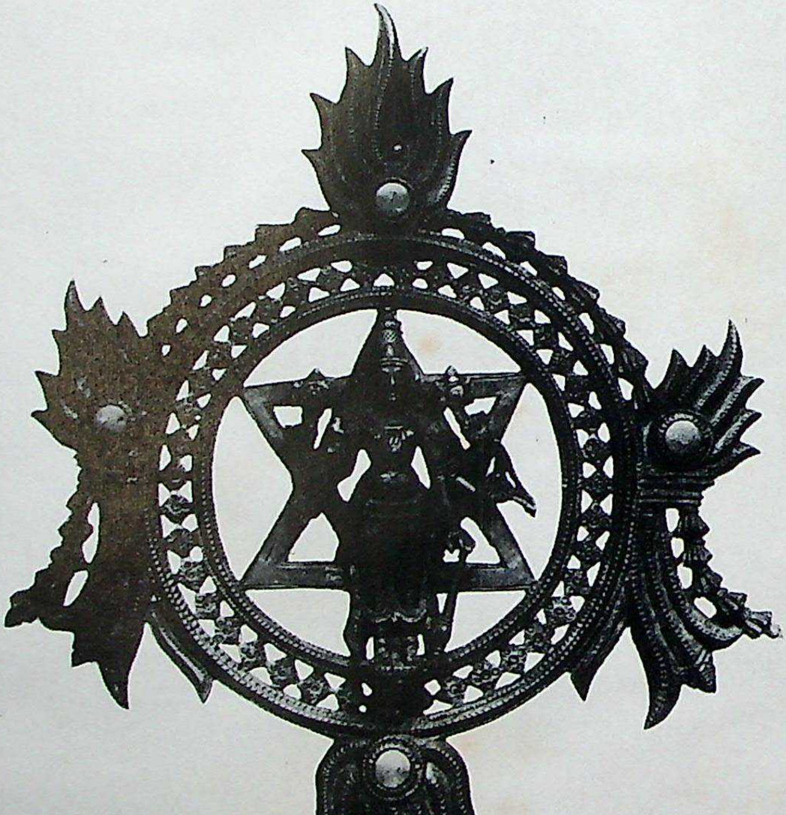

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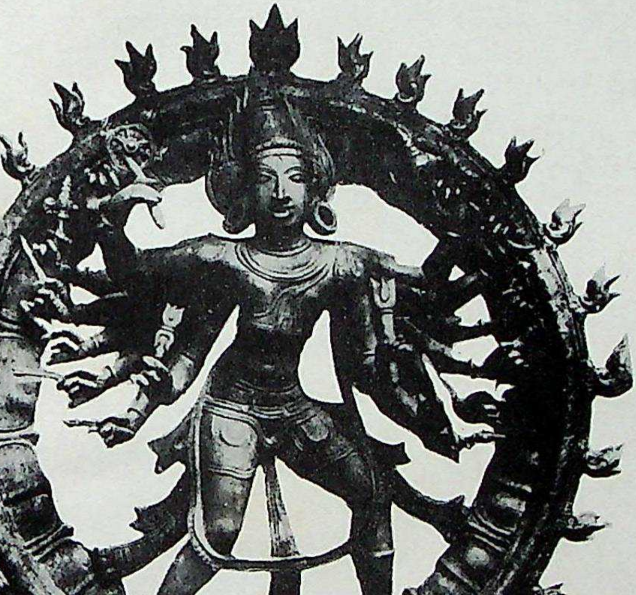

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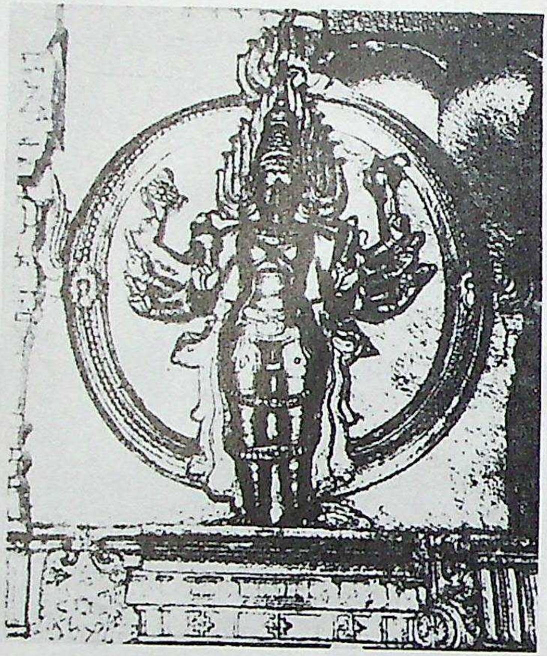

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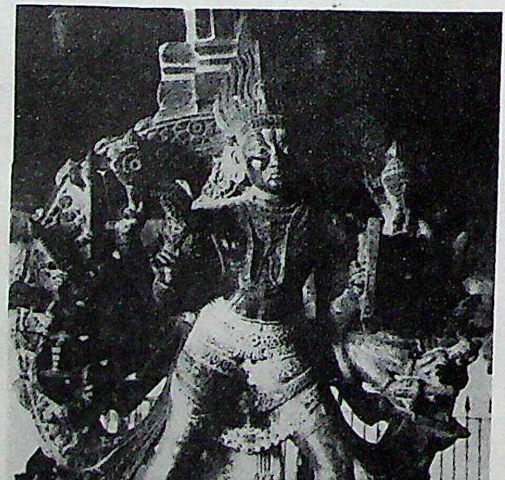
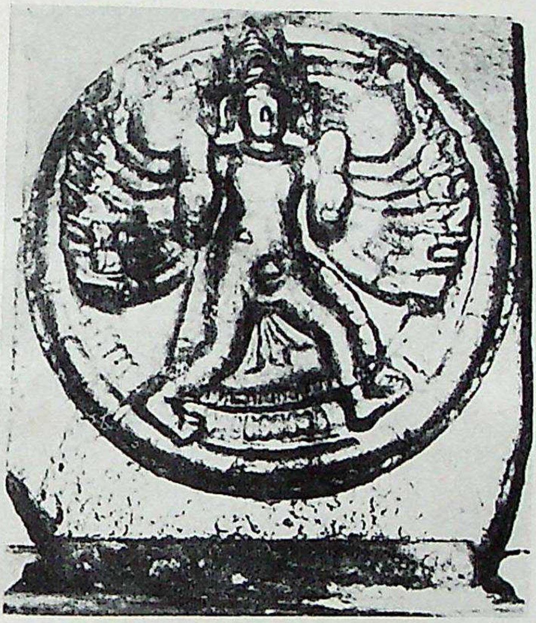
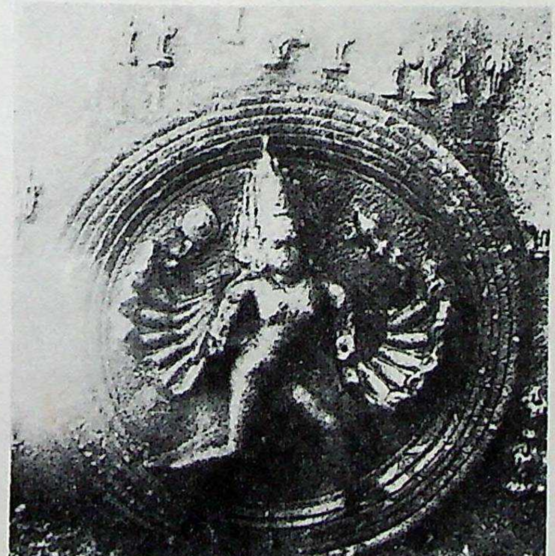


Fig. 16

Fig. 17





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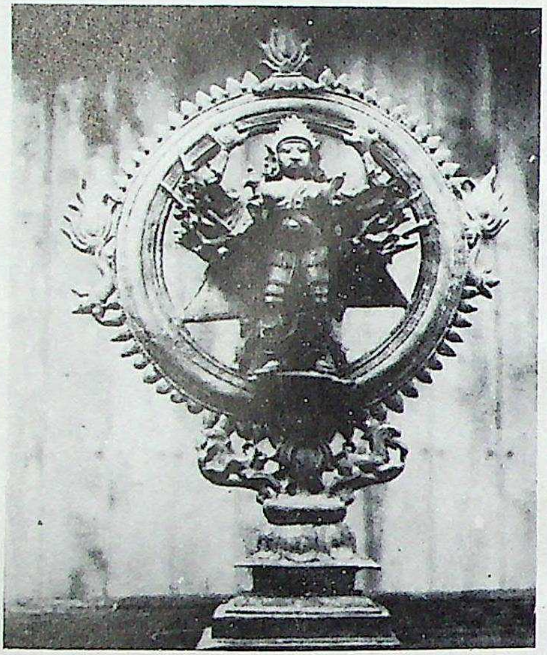

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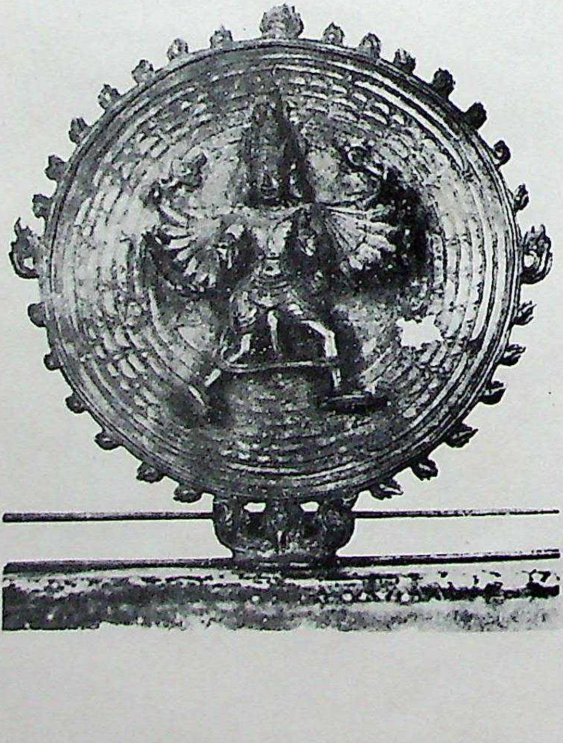

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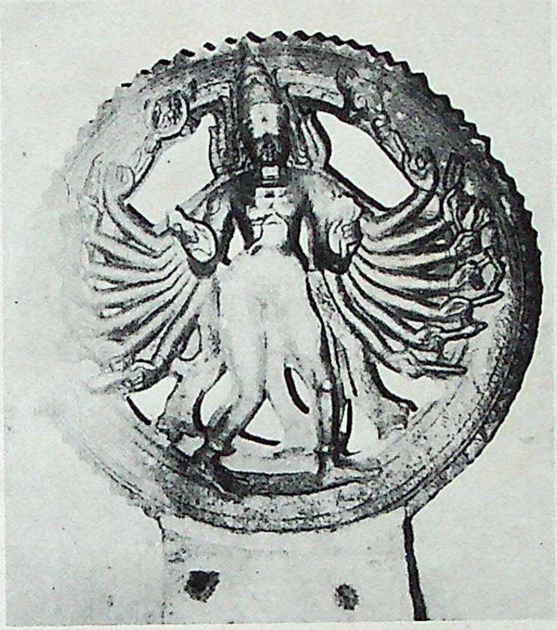

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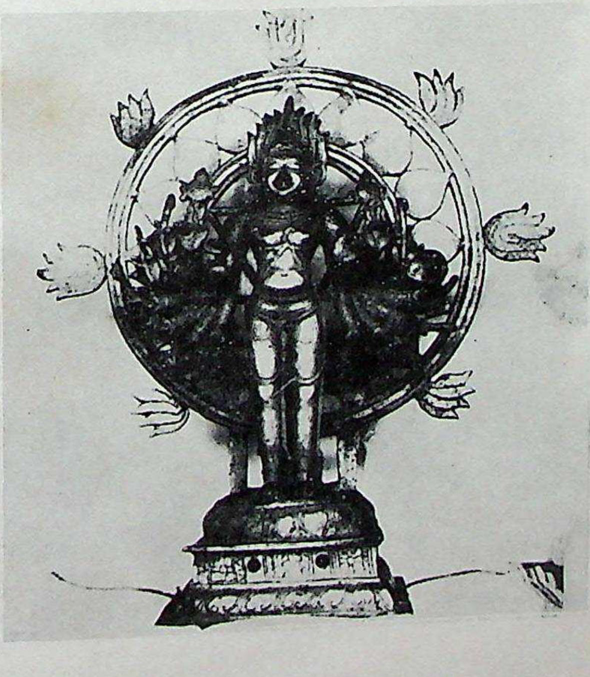

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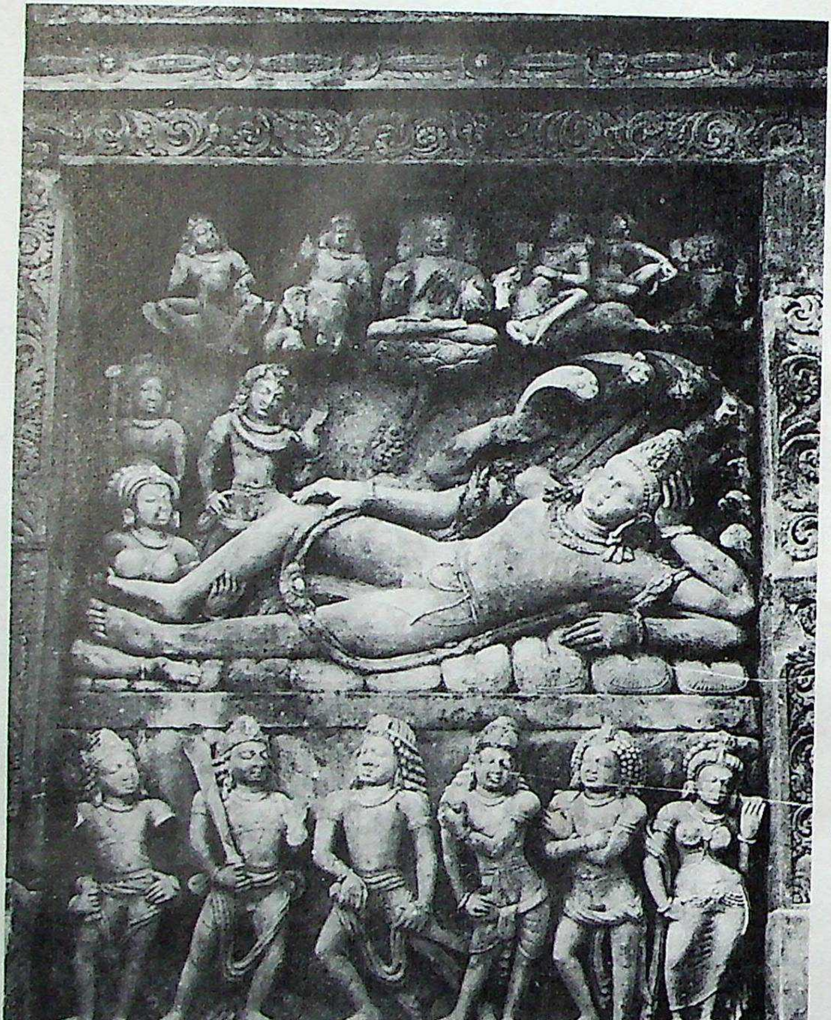

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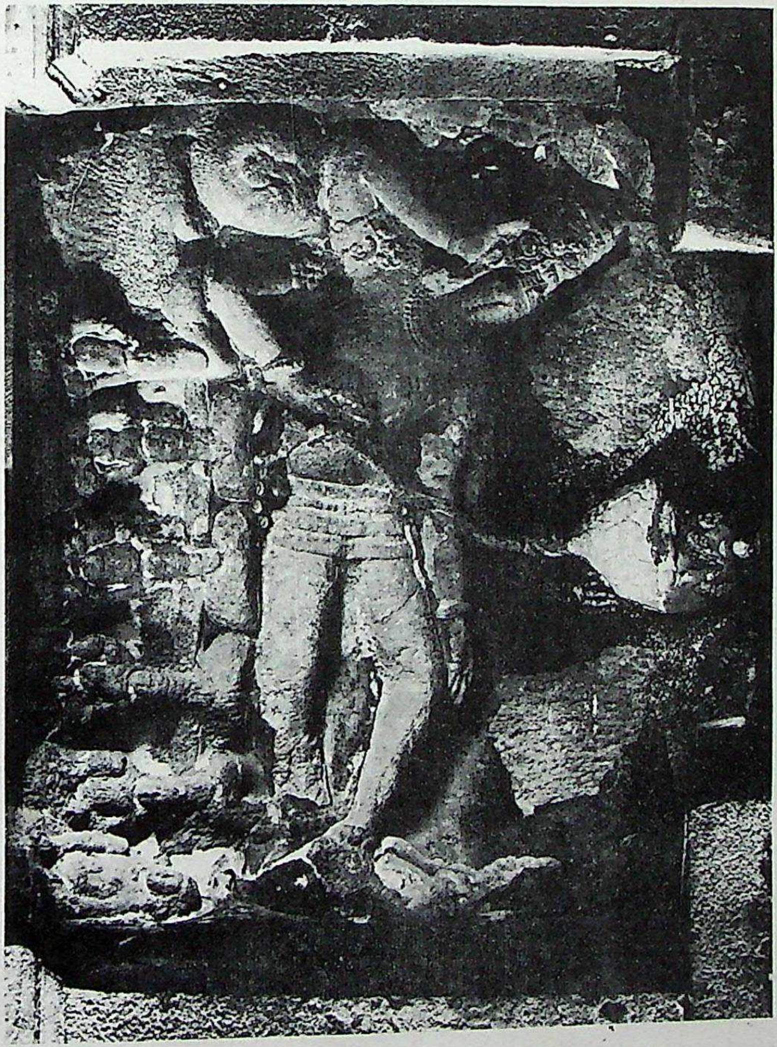

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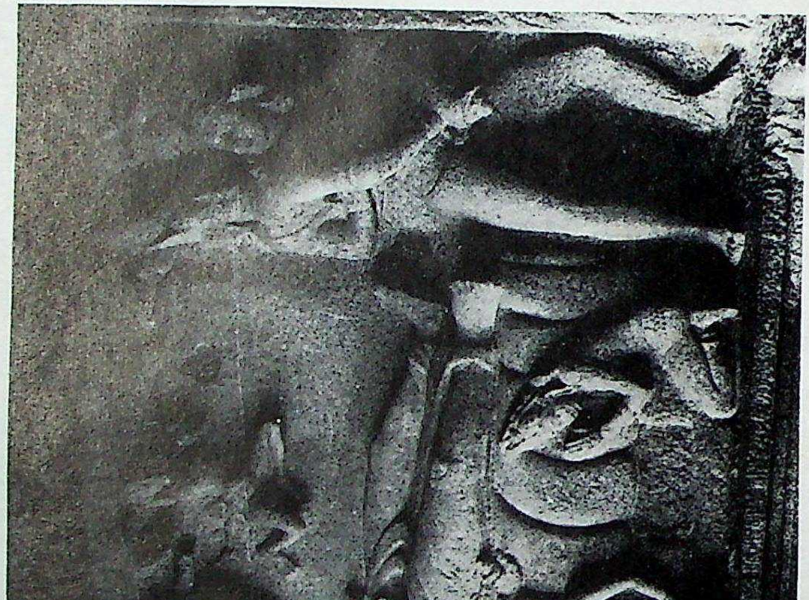

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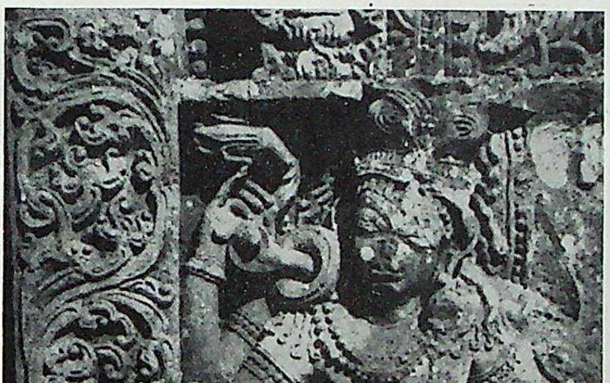

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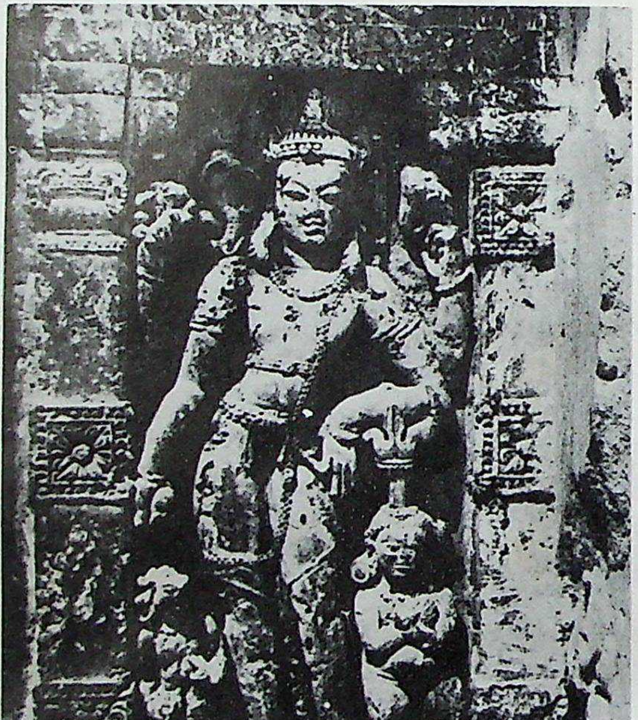

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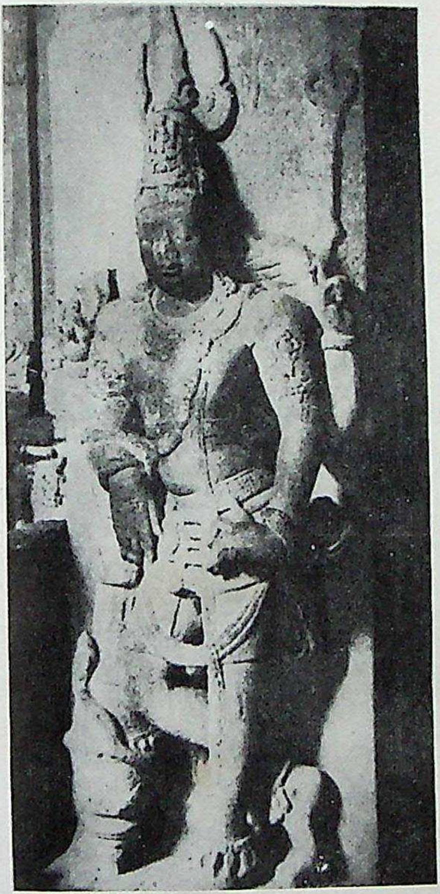

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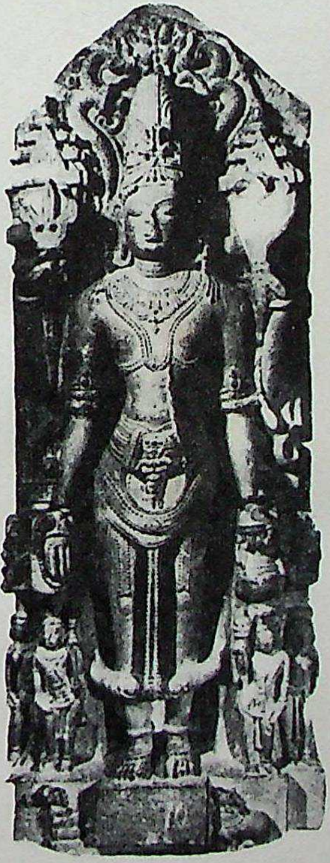

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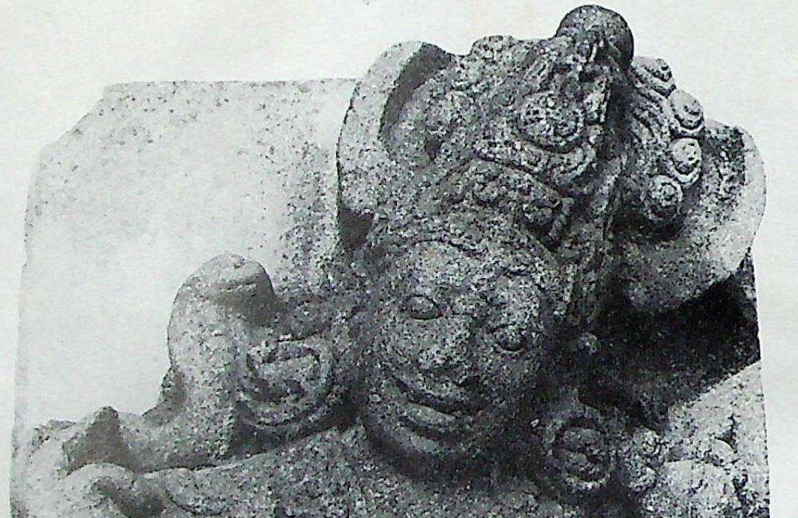

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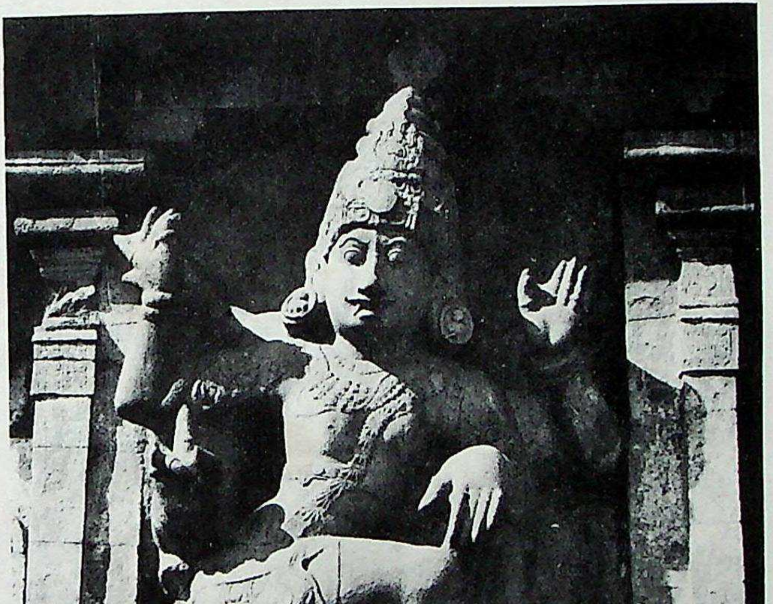

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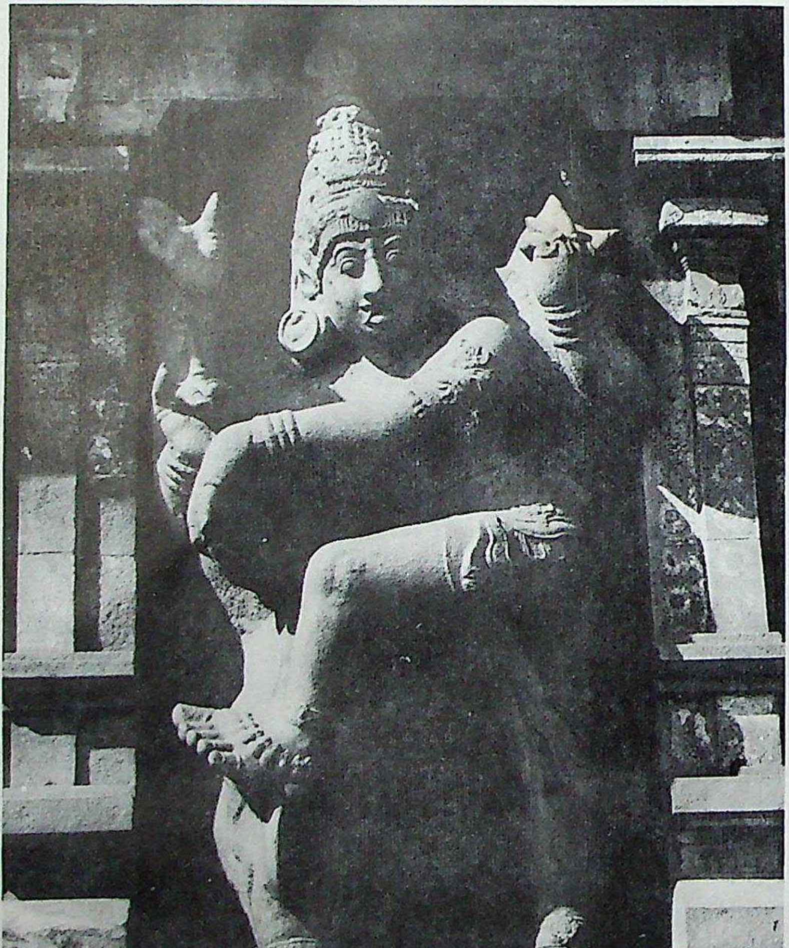

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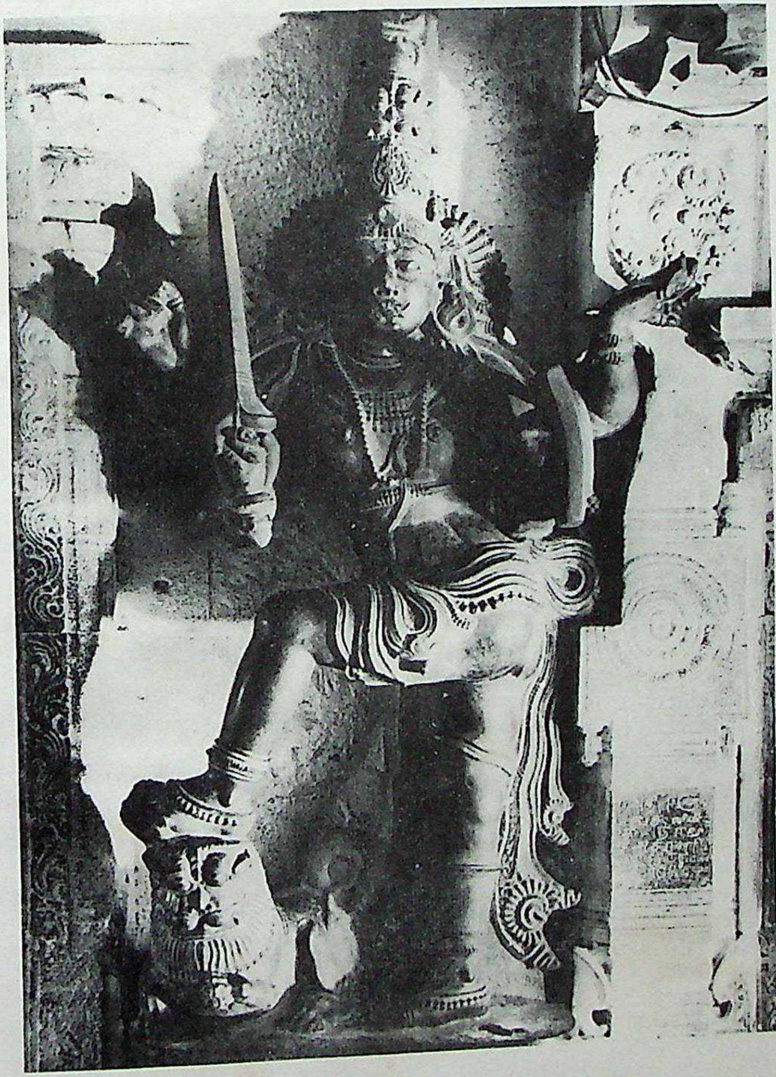

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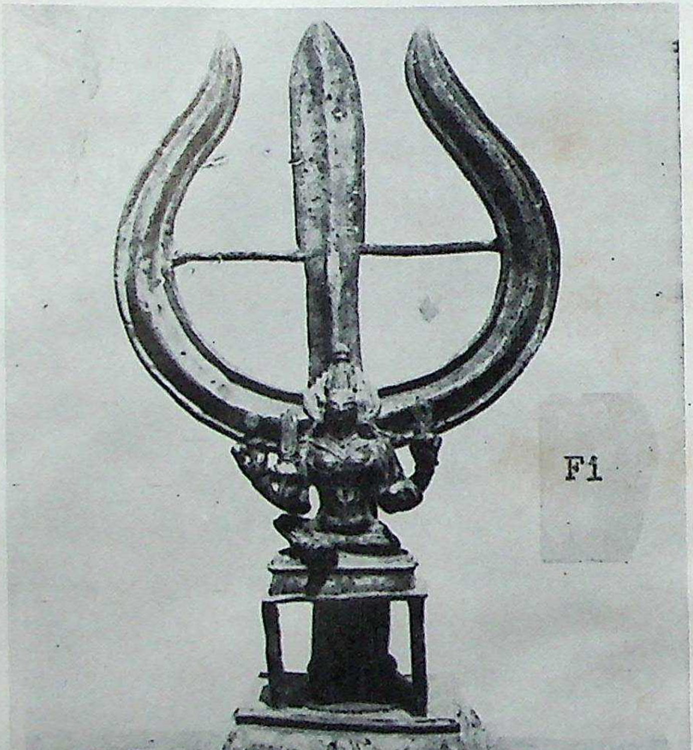

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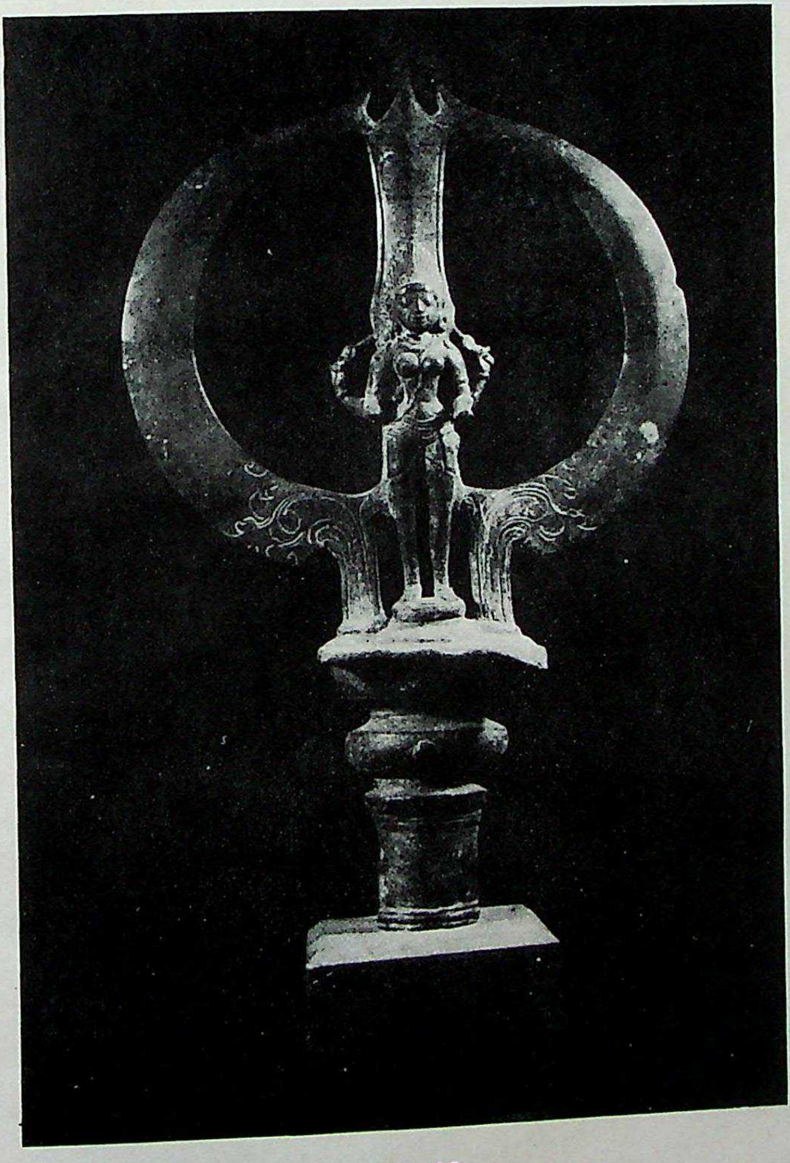

Fig. 35

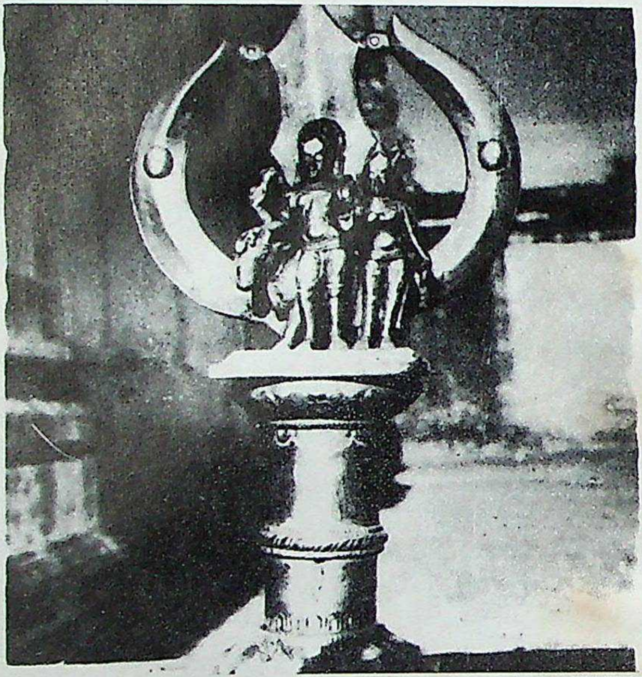

Fig. 36

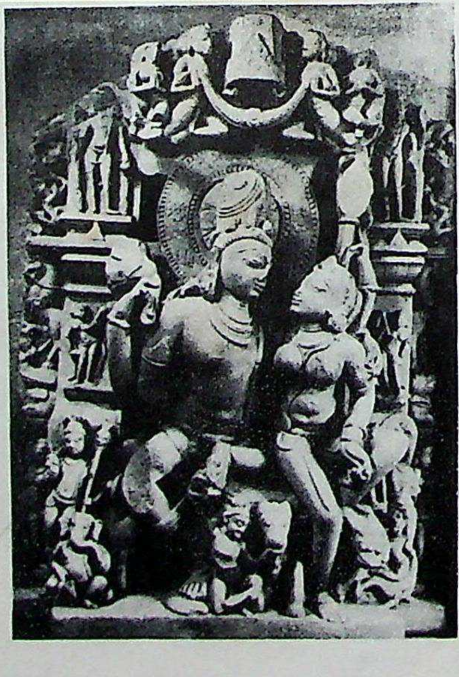

Fig. 38

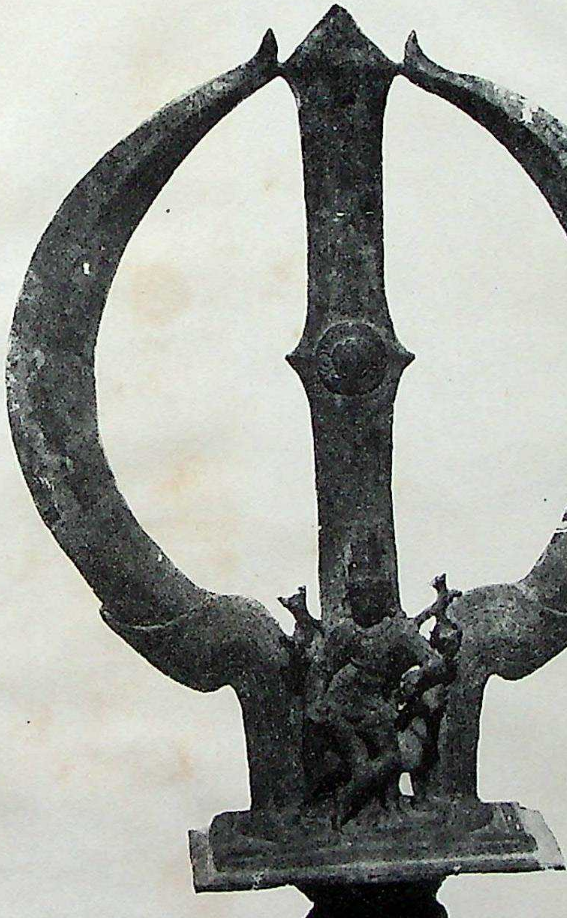

Fig. 37

AGAM KALA PRAKASHAN
DELHI